

THE
ODYSSEY.

OF

HOMER,

TRANSLATED BY A. POPE.

A NEW EDITION.

ADORNED WITH PLATES.

VOLUME I.

London: .

PRINTED FOR F. J. DU ROVERAY,

By T. Bensley, Bolt Court;

AND SOLD BY J. AND A. ARCH, CORNHILL, AND
E. LLOYD, HARLEY STREET.

1806.





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GENERAL VIEW
OF
THE EPIC POEM,
AND OF
THE ILIAD AND ODYSSEY,
EXTRACTED FROM BOSSU.

SECT. I.

THE fables of poets were originally employed in representing the Divine Nature,^a according to the notion then conceived of it. This sublime subject occasioned the first poets to be called divines, and poetry the language of the gods. They divided the divine attributes into so many persons; because the infirmity of a human mind cannot sufficiently conceive, or explain, so much power and action in a simplicity so great and indivisible as that of God. And perhaps they were also jealous of the advantages they reaped from such excellent and exalted learning, and of which they thought the vulgar part of mankind was not worthy.

They could not describe the operations of this almighty cause, without speaking at the same time of its effects: so that to divinity they added physiology, and

^a Of the Nature of Epic Poetry.



treated of both, without quitting the umbrages of their allegorical expressions.

But man being the chief and most noble of all that God produced, and nothing being so proper, or more useful, to poets than this subject, they added it to the former, and treated of the doctrine of morality after the same manner as they did that of divinity and physiology: and from morality thus treated, is formed that kind of poem and fable which we call epic.

The poets did the same in morality, that the divines had done in divinity. But that infinite variety of the actions and operations of the Divine Nature (to which our understanding bears so small a proportion) did as it were force them upon dividing the single idea of the only one God into several persons, under the different names of Jupiter, Juno, Neptune, and the rest.

And, on the other hand, the nature of moral philosophy being such, as never to treat of things in particular, but in general, the epic poets were obliged to unite in one single idea, in one and the same person, and in an action which appeared singular, all that looked like it in different persons, and in various actions; which might be thus contained as so many species under their genus.

The presence of the Deity, and the care such an august cause is to be supposed to take about any action, obliges the poet to represent this action as great, important, and managed by kings and princes.^b It obliges

^b *Res gestæ regumque ducumque.* HOR. Art. Poet.

him likewise to think and speak in an elevated way, above the vulgar, and in a style that may in some sort keep up the character of the divine persons he introduces. 'To this end serve the poetical and figurative expression, and the majesty of the heroic verse.

But all this, being divine and surprising, may quite ruin all probability: therefore the poet should take a peculiar care as to that point, since his chief aim is to instruct, and without probability any action is less likely to persuade.

Lastly, since precepts ought to be concise,^d to be the more easily conceived, and less oppress the memory, and since nothing can be more effectual to this end than proposing one single idea, and collecting all things so well together, as to be present to our minds all at once; therefore the poets have reduced all to one single action,^e under one and the same design, and in a body whose members and parts should be homogeneous.

What we have observed of the nature of the epic poem gives us a just idea of it, and we may define it thus:

'The epic poem is a discourse invented by art, to form the manners, by such instructions as are disguised

^c Cui mens diviniior atque os
Magna sonaturum, des Nominis hujus honorem. HORAT.

^d Quicquid præcipies esto brevis, ut citò dicta
Percipiant animi dociles, teneantque fideles. HOR. POET.

^e Denique sit quodvis simplex duntaxat, et unum. HOR. POET.

under the allegories of some one important action, which is related in verse, after a probable, diverting, and surprising manner.'

SECT. II.

IN every design^f which a man deliberately undertakes, the end he proposes is the first thing in his mind, and that by which he governs the whole work, and all its parts: thus since the end of the epic poem is to regulate the manners, it is with this first view the poet ought to begin.

But there is a great difference between the philosophical and the poetical doctrine of manners. The schoolmen content themselves with treating of virtues and vices in general: the instructions^a they give are proper for all states, people, and for all ages. But the poet has a nearer regard to his own country, and the necessities of his own nation. With this design he makes choice of some piece of morality, the most proper and just he can imagine: and in order to press this home, he makes less use of the force of reasoning, than of the power of insinuation; accommodating himself to the particular customs and inclinations of those who are to be the subject, or the readers, of his work.

Let us now see how Homer has acquitted himself in these respects.

He saw the Grecians, for whom he designed his

^f The Fable of the Iliad.

poem, were divided into as many states as they had capital cities. Each was a body politic apart, and had its form of government independent from all the rest. And yet these distinct states were very often obliged to unite together in one body against their common enemies. These were two very different sorts of government, such as could not be comprehended in one maxim of morality, and in one single poem.

The poet therefore has made two distinct fables of them. The one is for Greece in general, united into one body, but composed of parts independent on each other; and the other for each particular state, considered as they were in time of peace, without the former circumstances and the necessity of being united.

As for the first sort of government, in the union, or rather in the confederacy, of many independent states, experience has always made it appear, 'That nothing so much causes success as a due subordination, and a right understanding among the chief commanders. And, on the other hand, the inevitable ruin of such confederacies proceeds from the heats, jealousies, and ambition of the different leaders, and the discontents of submitting to a single general.' All sorts of states, and in particular the Grecians, had dearly experienced this truth. So that the most useful and necessary instruction that could be given them, was, to lay before their eyes the loss which both the people and the princes must of necessity suffer, by the ambition, discord, and obstinacy of the latter.

Homer then has taken for the foundation of his

table this great truth; that a misunderstanding between princes is the ruin of their own states. 'I sing (says he) the anger of Achilles, so pernicious to the Grecians, and the cause of so many heroes' deaths, occasioned by the discord and separation of Agamemnon and that prince.'

But that this truth may be completely and fully known, there is need of a second to support it. It is necessary in such a design, not only to represent the confederate states at first disagreeing among themselves, and from thence unfortunate, but to show the same states afterwards reconciled and united, and of consequence victorious.

Let us now see how he has joined all these in one general action.

'Several princes independent, or one another were united against a common enemy. The person whom they had elected their general offers an affront to the most valiant of all the confederates. This offended prince is so far provoked as to relinquish the union, and obstinately refuses to fight for the common cause. This misunderstanding gives the enemy such an advantage, that the allies are very near quitting their design with dishonour. He himself who made the separation is not exempt from sharing the misfortune which he brought upon his party: for having permitted his intimate friend to succour them in a great necessity, this friend is killed by the enemy's general. Thus the contending princes being both made wiser at their own cost, are reconciled, and unite again: then this valiant prince not only ob-

tains the victory in the public cause, but revenges his private wrongs by killing with his own hands the author of the death of his friend.

This is the first platform of the poem, and the fiction which reduces into one important and universal action all the particulars upon which it turns.

In the next place it must be rendered probable by the circumstances of times, places, and persons: some persons must be found out, already known by history or otherwise, whom we may with probability make the actors and personages of this fable. Homer has made choice of the siege of Troy, and feigned that this action happened there. To a phantom of his brain, whom he would paint valiant and choleric, he has given the name of Achilles; that of Agamemnon to his general; that of Hector to the enemy's commander, and so to the rest.

Besides, he was obliged to accommodate himself to the manners, customs, and genius of the Greeks his auditors, the better to make them attend to the instruction of his poem, and to gain their approbation by praising them; so that they might the better forgive him the representation of their own faults in some of his chief personages. He admirably discharges all these duties, by making these brave princes and those victorious people all Grecians, and the fathers of those he had a mind to commend.

But not being content, in a work of such a length, to propose only the principal point of the moral, and to fill up the rest with useless ornaments and foreign inci-

dents, he extends this moral by all its necessary consequences. As, for instance, in the subject before us, it is not enough to know, that a good understanding ought always to be maintained among confederates; it is likewise of equal importance, that if there happens any division, care must be taken to keep it secret from the enemy, that their ignorance of this advantage may prevent their making use of it. And in the second place, when their concord is but counterfeit and only in appearance, one should never press the enemy too closely; for this would discover the weakness which we ought to conceal from them.

The episode of Patroclus most admirably furnishes us with these two instructions; for when he appeared in the arms of Achilles, the Trojans, who took him for that prince now reconciled and united to the confederates, immediately gave ground, and quitted the advantages they had before over the Greeks. But Patroclus, who should have been contented with this success, presses upon Hector too boldly, and by obliging him to fight, soon discovers that it was not the true Achilles who was clad in his armour, but a hero of much inferior prowess. So that Hector kills him, and regains those advantages which the Trojans had lost, on the opinion that Achilles was reconciled.

SECT. III.

THE *Odyssey*² was not designed, like the *Iliad*, for the instruction of all the states of Greece joined in one body, but for each state in particular. As a state is composed of two parts, the head which commands and the members which obey, there are instructions requisite to both, to teach the one to govern, and the others to submit to government.

There are two virtues necessary to one in authority, prudence to order, and care to see his orders put in execution. The prudence of a politician is not acquired but by a long experience in all sorts of business, and by an acquaintance with all the different forms of governments and states. The care of the administration suffers not him that has the government to rely upon others, but requires his own presence; and kings who are absent from their states are in danger of losing them, and give occasion to great disorders and confusion.

These two points may be easily united in one and the same man. 'A king forsakes his kingdom to visit the courts of several princes, where he learns the manners and customs of different nations. From hence there naturally arises a vast number of incidents, of dangers, and of adventures, very useful for a political institution. On the other side, this absence gives way to the disorders which happen in his own kingdom, and

² The fable of the *Odyssey*.

which end not till his return, whose presence only can re-establish all things.' Thus the absence of a king has the same effects in this fable, as the division of the princes had in the former.

The subjects have scarce any need but of one general maxim, which is, To suffer themselves to be governed, and to obey faithfully, whatever reason they may imagine against the orders they receive. It is easy to join this instruction with the other, by bestowing on this wise and industrious prince such subjects, as in his absence would rather follow their own judgment than his commands; and by demonstrating the misfortunes which this disobedience draws upon them, the evil consequences which almost infallibly attend these particular notions, which are intirely different from the general idea of him who ought to govern.

But as it was necessary that the princes in the *Iliad* should be choleric and quarrelsome, so it is necessary in the fable of the *Odyssey* that the chief person should be sage and prudent. This raises a difficulty in the fiction; because this person ought to be absent for the two reasons aforementioned, which are essential to the fable, and which constitute the principal aim of it: but he cannot absent himself, without offending against another maxim of equal importance, viz. That a king should upon no account leave his country.

It is true, there are sometimes such necessities as sufficiently excuse the prudence of a politician in this point. But such a necessity is a thing important enough of itself to supply matter for another poem, and this

multiplication of the action would be vicious. To prevent which, in the first place, this necessity and the departure of the hero must be disjoined from the poem; and, in the second place, the hero having been obliged to absent himself, for a reason antecedent to the action and placed distinct from the fable, he ought not so far to embrace this opportunity of instructing himself, as to absent himself voluntarily from his own government. For at this rate, his absence would be merely voluntary, and one might with reason lay to his charge all the disorders which might arise.

Thus in the constitution of the fable he ought not to take for his action, and for the foundation of his poem, the departure of a prince from his own country, nor his voluntary stay in any other place; but his return, and this return retarded against his will. This is the first idea Homer gives us of it. His hero^h appears at first in a desolate island, sitting upon the side of the sea, which with tears in his eyes he looks upon as the obstacle that had so long opposed his return, and detained him from revisiting his own dear country. •

And lastly, since this forced delay might more naturally and usually happen to such as make voyages by sea, Homer has judiciously made choice of a prince whose kingdom was in an island. • • •

Let us see then how he has feigned all this action, making his hero a person in years, because years are requisite to instruct a man in prudence and policy.

^h *Odyssey* v.

' A prince had been obliged to forsake his native country, and to head an army of his subjects in a foreign expedition. Having gloriously performed this enterprise, he was marching home again, and conducting his subjects to his own state; but, spite of all the attempts with which the eagerness to return had inspired him, he was stopt by the way by tempests for several years, and cast upon several countries differing from each other in manners and government. In these dangers, his companions, not always following his orders, perished through their own fault. The grandees of his country strangely abuse his absence, and raise no small disorders at home. They consume his estate, conspire to destroy his son, would constrain his queen to accept of one of them for her husband; and indulge themselves in all violence, so much the more, because they were persuaded he would never return. But at last he returns, and discovering himself only to his son and some others, who had continued firm to him, he is an eye-witness of the insolence of his enemies, punishes them according to their deserts, and restores to his island that tranquillity and repose to which they had been strangers during his absence.'

As the truth, which serves for foundation to this fiction, is, that the absence of a person from his own home, or his neglect of his own affairs, is the cause of great disorders; so the principal point of the action, and the most essential one, is the absence of the hero. This fills almost all the poem; for not only this real absence lasted several years, but even when the hero

returned he does not discover himself: and this prudent disguise, from whence he reaped so much advantage, has the same effect upon the authors of the disorders, and all others who knew him not, as his real absence had before; so that he is absent as to them till the very moment of their punishment.

After the poet had thus composed his fable, and joined the fiction to the truth, he then made choice of Ulysses, the king of the isle of Ithaca, to maintain the character of his chief personage, and bestowed the rest upon Telemachus, Penelope, Antinous, and others, whom he calls by what names he pleases.

I shall not here insist upon the many excellent advices, which are so many parts and natural consequences of the fundamental truth; and which the poet very dexterously lays down in those fictions which are the episodes and members of the entire action. Such for instance are these advices:—Not to intrude oneself into the mysteries of government, which the prince keeps secret: this is represented to us by the winds shut up in a bull's hide, which the miserable companions of Ulysses would needs be so foolish as to pry into. Not to suffer oneself to be led away by the seeming charms of an idle and inactive life, to which the Sirens' songⁱ invited. Not to suffer oneself to be sensualized by pleasures, like those who were changed into brutes by Circe: and a great many other points of morality necessary for all sorts of people.

ⁱ Improba Siren desidia. HORAT.

This poem is more useful to the people than the Iliad, where the subjects suffer rather by the ill conduct of their princes than through their own miscarriages. But in the Odyssey it is not the fault of Ulysses that is the ruin of his subjects. This wise prince leaves untried no method to make them partakers of the benefit of his return. Thus the poet in the Iliad says, 'He sings the anger of Achilles, which had caused the death of so many Grecians;' and on the contrary, in the Odyssey^k he tells his readers, 'That the subjects perished through their own fault.'

SECT. IV.

ARISTOTLE^l bestows great encomiums upon Homer for the simplicity of his design, because he has included in one single part all that happened at the siege of Troy. And to this he opposes the ignorance of some poets, who imagined that the unity of the fable or action was sufficiently preserved by the unity of the hero; and who composed their Theseids, Heracleids, and the like, wherein they only heaped up in one poem every thing that happened to one personage.

He finds fault with those poets who were for reducing the unity of the fable into the unity of the hero, because one man may have performed several adventures which it is impossible to reduce under any one

^k Αὐτῶν γὰρ σφθίευσιν ἀτασθαλεῦσιν ὄλοντο. Odyss i.

^l Of the unity of the fable.

general and simple head. This reducing of all things to unity and simplicity is what Horace likewise makes his first rule :

‘ Denique sit quodvis simplex duntaxat, et unum.’

According to these rules, it will be allowable to make use of several Fables, or, to speak more correctly, of several incidents which may be divided into several fables; provided they are so ordered that the unity of the fable be not spoiled. This liberty is still greater in the epic poem, because it is of a larger extent, and ought to be entire and complete.

I will explain myself more distinctly by the practice of Homer.

No doubt but one might make four distinct fables out of these four following instructions :

1. ‘ Division between those of the same party exposes them entirely to their enemies.’
2. ‘ Conceal your weakness, and you will be dreaded as much as if you had none of those imperfections of which they are ignorant.’
3. ‘ When your strength is only feigned, and founded only in the opinion of others, never venture so far as if your strength was real.’
4. ‘ The more you agree together, the less hurt can your enemies do you.’

It is plain, I say, that each of these particular maxims might serve for the ground-work of a fiction, and

one might make four distinct fables out of them. May not one then put all these into one single epopea? Not unless one single fable can be made out of all. The poet indeed may have so much skill as to unite all into one body as members and parts, each of which taken asunder would be imperfect; and if he joins them so, this conjunction shall be no hinderance at all to the unity and the regular simplicity of the fable. This is what Homer has done with such success in the composition of the Iliad.

1. 'The division between Achilles and his allies tended to the ruin of their designs.' 2. 'Patroclus comes to their relief in the armour of this hero, and Hector retreats.' 3. 'But this young man, pushing the advantage which his disguise gave him too far, ventures to engage with Hector himself; but not being master of Achilles's strength (whom he only represented in outward appearance) he is killed, and by this means leaves the Grecian affairs in the same disorder, from which in that disguise he came to free them.' 4. 'Achilles, provoked at the death of his friend, is reconciled, and revenges his loss by the death of Hector.' These various incidents being thus united, do not make different actions and fables, but are only the incomplete and unfinished parts of one and the same action and fable, which alone, when taken thus complexly, can be said to be complete and entire: and all these maxims of the moral are easily reduced into these two parts, which in my opinion cannot be separated without enervating the force of both. The two parts are



these, ^m That a right understanding is the preservation, and discord the destruction of states.

Though then the poet has made use of two parts in his poems, each of which might have served for a fable, as we have observed, yet this multiplication cannot be called a vicious and irregular polymythia, contrary to the necessary unity and simplicity of the fable; but it gives the fable another qualification, altogether necessary and regular, namely, its perfection and finishing stroke.

SECT. V.

THE actionⁿ of a poem is the subject which the poet undertakes, proposes, and builds upon. So that the moral and the instructions which are the end of the epic poem are not the matter of it. Those the poets leave in their allegorical and figurative obscurity. They only give notice at the exordium, that they sing some action; the revenge of Achilles, the return of Ulysses, &c.

Since then the action is the matter of a fable, it is evident that whatever incidents are essential to the fable, or constitute a part of it, are necessary also to the action, and are parts of the epic matter, none of which ought to be omitted. Such, for instance, are the contention of Agamemnon and Achilles, the slaughter Hec-

^m 'Concordiâ res parvæ crescunt, discordiâ magnæ dilabuntur. SALLUST. de Bello Jug.

ⁿ Of the action of the epic poem.

tor makes in the Grecian army, the reunion of the Greek princes; and lastly, the resettlement and victory which was the consequence of that reunion.

There are four qualifications in the epic action; the first is its unity, the second its integrity, the third its importance, the fourth its duration.

The unity of the epic action, as well as the unity of the fable, does not consist either in the unity of the hero, or in the unity of time: three things I suppose are necessary to it. The first is, to make use of no episode but what arises from the very platform and foundation of the action, and is as it were a natural member of the body. The second is, exactly to unite these episodes and these members with one another. And the third is, never to finish any episode so as it may seem to be an entire action; but to let each episode still appear, in its own particular nature, as the member of a body, and as a part of itself not complete.

Aristotle^o not only says that the epic action should be one, but adds, that it should be entire, perfect, and complete; and for this purpose ought to have a beginning, a middle, and an end. These three parts of a whole are too generally and universally denoted by the words, beginning, middle, and end; we may interpret them more precisely, and say, that the causes and designs of an action are the beginning; that the effects of these causes, and the difficulties that are met with in the execution of these designs, are the middle; and

^o Of the beginning, middle, and end of the action.

that the unravelling and resolution of these difficulties are the end.

Homer's ^P design in the Iliad is to relate the anger and revenge of Achilles. The beginning of this action is the change of Achilles from a calm to a passionate temper. The middle is the effects of his passion, and all the illustrious deaths it is the cause of. The end of this same action is the return of Achilles to his calmness of temper again. All was quiet in the Grecian camp, when Agamemnon their general provokes Apollo against them, whom he was willing to appease afterwards at the cost and prejudice of Achilles, who had no part in his fault. This then is an exact beginning; it supposes nothing before, and requires after it the effects of this anger. Achilles revenges himself, and that is an exact middle; it supposes before it the anger of Achilles, this revenge is the effect of it. Then this middle requires after it the effects of this revenge, which is the satisfaction of Achilles: for the revenge had not been complete; unless Achilles had been satisfied. By this means the poet makes his hero, after he was glutted by the mischief he had done to Agamemnon, by the death of Hector, and the honour he did his friend, by insulting over his murderer; he makes him, I say, to be moved by the tears and misfortunes of king Priam. We see him as calm at the end of the poem, during the funeral of Hector, as he was at the beginning of the poem, whilst the plague raged among the Grecians.

This end is just, since the calmness of temper Achilles re-enjoyed, is only an effect of the revenge which ought to have preceded: and after this nobody expects any more of his anger. Thus has Homer been very exact in the beginning, middle, and end of the action he made choice of for the subject of his Iliad.

His design⁹ in the Odyssey was to describe the return of Ulysses from the siege of Troy, and his arrival at Ithaca. He opens this poem with the complaints of Minerva against Neptune, who opposed the return of this hero, and against Calypso, who detained him in an island from Ithaca. Is this a beginning? No; doubtless, the reader would know why Neptune is displeased with Ulysses, and how this prince came to be with Calypso? He would know how he came from Troy ~~thither~~? The poet answers his demands out of the mouth of Ulysses himself, who relates these things, and begins the action by the recital of his travels from the city of Troy. It signifies little whether the beginning of the action be the beginning of the poem. The beginning of this action is that which happens to Ulysses, when upon his leaving Troy he bends his course for Ithaca. The middle comprehends all the misfortunes he endured, and all the disorders of his own government. The end is the reinstating of the hero in the peaceable possession of his kingdom, where he was acknowledged by his son, his wife, his father, and several others. The poet was sensible he should have ended ill, had he

⁹ The action of the Odyssey.

gone no farther than the death of these princes, who were the rivals and enemies of Ulysses, because the reader might have looked for some revenge which the subjects of these princes might have taken on him who had killed their sovereigns: but this danger over, and the people vanquished and quieted, there was nothing more to be expected. The poem and the action have all their parts,* and no more.

But the order of the *Odyssey* differs from that of the *Iliad*, in that the poem does not begin with the beginning of the action.

The causes^r of the action are also what the poet is obliged to give an account of. There are three sorts of causes, the humours, the interests, and the designs of men; and these different causes of an action are likewise often the causes of one another, every man taking up those interests in which his humour engages him, and forming those designs to which his humour and interest incline him. Of all these the poet ought to inform his readers, and render them conspicuous in his principal personages.

Homer has ingeniously begun his *Odyssey* with the transactions at Ithaca, during the absence of Ulysses. If he had begun with the travels of his hero, he would scarce have spoken of any one else; and a man might have read a great deal of the poem, without conceiving the least idea of Telemachus, Penelope, or her suitors, who had so great a share in the action; but in the be-

^r Of the causes and beginning of the action.

ginning he has pitched upon, besides these personages whom he discovers, he represents Ulysses in his full length; and from the very first opening one sees the interest which the gods take in the action.

The skill and care of the same poet may be seen likewise in inducing his personages in the first book of his Iliad, where he discovers the humours, the interests, and the designs of Agamemnon, Achilles, Hector, Ulysses, and several others, and even of the deities. And in his second he makes a review of the Grecian and Trojan armies, which is full evidence, that all we have here said is very necessary.

As these causes^s are the beginning of the action, the opposite designs against that of the hero are the middle of it, and form that difficulty, or intrigue, which makes up the greatest part of the poem; the solution or unravelling commences when the reader begins to see that difficulty removed, and the doubts cleared up. Homer has divided each of his poems into two parts, and has put a particular intrigue, and the solution of it, into each part.

The first part of the Iliad is the anger of Achilles, who is for revenging himself upon Agamemnon by the means of Hector and the Trojans. The intrigue comprehends the three days fight which happened in the absence of Achilles: and it consists on one side in the resistance of Agamemnon and the Grecians, and on the other in the revengeful and inexorable humour of

^s Of the middle or intrigue of the action.

Achilles, which would not suffer him to be reconciled. The loss of the Grecians, and the despair of Agamemnon, prepare for a solution by the satisfaction which the incensed hero received from it. The death of Patroclus, joined to the offers of Agamemnon, which of themselves had proved ineffectual, remove this difficulty, and make the unravelling of the first part.

This death is likewise the beginning of the second part; since it puts Achilles upon the design of revenging himself on Hector. But the design of Hector is opposite to that of Achilles: this Trojan is valiant, and resolved to stand on his own defence. This valour and resolution of Hector are on his part the cause of the intrigue. All the endeavours Achilles used to meet with Hector, and be the death of him; and the contrary endeavours of the Trojan to keep out of his reach, and defend himself, are the intrigue; which comprehends the battle of the last day. The unravelling begins at the death of Hector; and besides that, it contains the insulting of Achilles over his body, the honours he paid to Patroclus, and the intreaties of king Priam. The regrets of this king, and the other Trojans, in the sorrowful obsequies they paid to Hector's body, end the unravelling; they justify the satisfaction of Achilles, and demonstrate his tranquillity.

The first part of the *Odyssey* is the return of Ulysses into Ithaca. Neptune opposes it by raising tempests, and this makes the intrigue. The unravelling is the arrival of Ulysses upon his own island, where Neptune

the reinstating this hero in his own government. The princes that are his rivals, oppose him, and this is a fresh intrigue: the solution of it begins at their deaths, and is completed as soon as the Ithacans were appeased.

These two parts in the *Odyssey* have not one common intrigue. The anger of Achilles forms both the intrigues in the *Iliad*; and it is so far the matter of this epopea, that the very beginning and end of this poem depend on the beginning and end of this anger. But let the desire Achilles had to revenge himself, and the desire Ulysses had to return to his own country, be never so near allied, yet we cannot place them under one and the same notion; for that desire of Ulysses is not a passion that begins and ends in the poem with the action; it is a natural habit: nor does the poet propose it for his subject, as he does the anger of Achilles.

We have already observed what is meant by the intrigue, and the unravelling thereof; let us now say something of the manner of forming both. These two should arise naturally out of the very essence and subject of the poem, and are to be deduced from thence. Their conduct is so exact and natural, that it seems as if their action had presented them with whatever they inserted, without putting themselves to the trouble of a farther inquiry.

What is more usual and natural to warriors, than anger, heat, passion, and impatience of bearing the least affront or disrespect? This is what forms the intrigue of the *Iliad*; and every thing we read there is no-

thing else but the effect of this humour and these passions.

What more natural and usual obstacle to those who take voyages, than the sea, the winds, and the storms? Homer makes this the intrigue of the first part of the *Odyssey*: and for the second, he makes use of almost the infallible effect of the long absence of a master, whose return is quite despaired of, viz. the insolence of his servants and neighbours, the danger of his son and wife, and the sequestration of his estate. Besides, an absence of almost twenty years, and the insupportable fatigues joined to the age of which Ulysses then was, might induce him to believe that he should not be owned by those who thought him dead, and whose interest it was to have him really so. Therefore if he had presently declared who he was, and had called himself Ulysses, they would easily have destroyed him as an impostor, before he had an opportunity to make himself known.

There could be nothing more natural nor more necessary than this ingenious disguise, to which the advantages his enemies had taken of his absence had reduced him, and to which his long misfortunes had inured him. This allowed him an opportunity, without hazarding any thing, of taking the best measures he could, against those persons who could not so much as mistrust any harm from him. This way was afforded him, by the very nature of his action, to execute his designs, and overcome the obstacles it cast before him. And it is this contest between the prudence and the

dissimulation of a single man on one hand, and the ungovernable insolence of so many rivals on the other, which constitutes the intrigue of the second part of the *Odyssey*.

If the plot^t or intrigue must be natural, and such as springs from the very subject, as has been already urged, then the winding-up of the plot, by a more sure claim, must have this qualification, and be a probable consequence of all that went before. As this is what the readers regard more than the rest, so should the poet be more exact in it. This is the end of the poem, and the last impression that is to be stamped upon them.

We shall find this in the *Odyssey*. Ulysses by a tempest is cast upon the island of the Phæacians, to whom he discovers himself, and desires they would favour his return to his own country, which was not very far distant. One cannot see any reason why the king of this island should refuse such a reasonable request to a hero whom he seemed to have in great esteem. The Phæacians indeed had heard him tell the story of his adventures; and in this fabulous recital consisted all the advantage that he could derive from his presence; for the art of war which they admired in him, his undauntedness under dangers, his indefatigable patience, and other virtues, were such as these islanders were not used to. All their talent lay in singing and dancing, and whatsoever was charming in a quiet life. And here we see how dexterously Homer prepares the incidents

^t Of the end or unravelling of the action.

he makes use of. These people could do no less, for the account with which Ulysses had so much entertained them, than afford him a ship and a safe convoy, which was of little expence or trouble to them.

When he arrived, his long absence, and the travels which had disfigured him, made him altogether unknown; and the danger he would have incurred, had he discovered himself too soon, forced him to a disguise: lastly, this disguise gave him an opportunity of surprising those young suitors, who for several years together had been accustomed to nothing but to sleep well, and fare daintily.

It was from these examples that Aristotle drew this rule, that 'Whatever concludes the poem should so spring from the very constitution of the fable, as if it were a necessary, or at least a probable consequence.'

SECT. VI.

THE time^u of the epic action is not fixed like that of the dramatic poem: it is much longer; for an uninterrupted duration is much more necessary in an action which one sees and is present at, than in one which we only read or hear repeated. Besides tragedy is fuller of passion, and consequently of such a violence as cannot admit of so long a duration.

The Iliad containing an action of anger and violence,

^u The time of the action

the poet allows it but a short time, about forty days. The design of the *Odyssey* required another conduct; the character of the hero is prudence and long-suffering; therefore the time of its duration is much longer, above eight years.

The passions^w of tragedy are different from those of the epic poem. In the former, terror and pity have the chief place; the passion that seems most peculiar to epic poetry, is admiration.

Besides this admiration, which in general distinguishes the epic poem from the dramatic, each epic poem has likewise some peculiar passion, which distinguishes it in particular from other epic poems, and constitutes a kind of singular^r and individual difference between these poems of the same species. These singular passions correspond to the character of the hero. Anger and terror reign throughout the *Iliad*, because Achilles is angry, and the most terrible of all men. The *Æneid* has all the soft and tender passions, because that is the character of Æneas. The prudence, wisdom, and constancy, of Ulysses do not allow him either of these extremes, therefore the poet does not permit one of them to be predominant in the *Odyssey*. He confines himself to admiration only, which he carries to an higher pitch than in the *Iliad*: and it is upon this account that he introduces a great many more machines in the *Odyssey*, into the body of the action, than are to be seen in the actions of the other two poems.

The manners^x of the epic poem ought to be poetically good, but it is not necessary they be always morally so. They are poetically good, when one may discover the virtue or vice, the good or ill inclinations, of every one who speaks or acts: they are poetically bad, when persons are made to speak or act out of character, or inconsistently, or unequally. The manners of Æneas and of Mezentius are equally good, considered poetically, because they equally demonstrate the piety of the one, and the impiety of the other.

It^y is requisite to make the same distinction between a hero in morality, and a hero in poetry, as between moral and poetical goodness. Achilles had as much right to the latter as Æneas. Aristotle says, that the hero of a poem should be neither good nor bad; neither advanced above the rest of mankind by his virtues, or sunk beneath them by his vices; that he may be the proper and fuller example to others, both what to imitate and what to decline.

The other qualifications of the manners are, that they be suitable to the causes which either raise or discover them in the persons; that they have an exact resemblance to what history, or fable, have delivered of those persons to whom they are ascribed; and that there be an equality in them, so that no man is made to act, or speak, out of his character.

But this equality is not sufficient for the unity^z of the character; it is further necessary, that the same

^x The manners.

^y Character of the hero.

^z Unity of the character.

spirit appear in all sorts of encounters. Thus *Æneas* acting with great piety and mildness in the first part of the *Æneid*, which requires no other character; and afterwards appearing illustrious in heroic valour, in the wars of the second part; but there, without any appearance either of a hard or a soft disposition; would, doubtless, be far from offending against the equality of the manners: but yet there would be no simplicity or unity in the character. So that, besides the qualities that claim their particular place upon different occasions, there must be one appearing throughout, which commands over all the rest; and without this, we may affirm, it is no character.

One may indeed make a hero as valiant as *Achilles*, as pious as *Æneas*, and as prudent as *Ulysses*. But it is a mere chimæra to imagine a hero that has the valour of *Achilles*, the piety of *Æneas*, and the prudence of *Ulysses*, at one and the same time. This vision might happen to an author, who would suit the character of a hero to whatever each part of the action might naturally require, without regarding the essence of the fable, or the unity of the character in the same person upon all sorts of occasions: this hero would be the mildest, best-natured, prince in the world, and also the most cholerick, hard-hearted, and implacable creature imaginable; he would be extremely tender like *Æneas*, extremely violent like *Achilles*, and yet have the indifference of *Ulysses*, that is incapable of the two extremes. Would it not be in vain for the poet to call this person by the same name throughout?

Let us reflect on the effects it would produce in several poems, whose authors were of opinion, that the chief character of a hero is that of an accomplished man. They would be all alike; all valiant in battle, prudent in council, pious in the acts of religion, courteous, civil, magnificent, and, lastly, endued with all the prodigious virtues any poet could invent. All this would be independent of the action and the subject of the poem; and, upon seeing each hero separated from the rest of the work, we should not easily guess, to what action, and to what poem, the hero belonged. So that we should see, that none of those would have a character, since the character is that which makes a person discernible, and which distinguishes him from all others.

This commanding quality in Achilles is his anger, in Ulysses the art of dissimulation, in Æneas meekness. Each of these may be styled, by way of eminence, the character in these heroes.

But these characters cannot be alone. It is absolutely necessary that some other should give them a lustre, and embellish them as far as they are capable; either by hiding the defects that are in each, by some noble and shining qualities, as the poet has done the anger of Achilles, by shading it with extraordinary valour; or by making them entirely of the nature of a true and solid virtue, as is to be observed in the two others. The dissimulation of Ulysses is a part of his prudence; and the meekness of Æneas is wholly employed in submitting his will to the gods. For the making up this union, our poets have joined together

such qualities as are by nature the most compatible; valour with anger, meekness with piety, and prudence with dissimulation. This last union was necessary for the goodness of Ulysses; for without that, his dissimulation might have degenerated into wickedness and double-dealing.

SECT. VII.

WE come now to the machines^a of the epic poem. The chief passion which it aims to excite being admiration, nothing is so conducive to that as the marvellous; and the importance and dignity of the action is by nothing so greatly elevated as by the care and interposition of heaven.

The machines are of three sorts. Some are theological, and were invented to explain the nature of the gods. Others are physical, and represent the things of nature. The last are moral, and are the images of virtues and vices.

Homer and the ancients have given to their deities the manners, passions, and vices of men. Their poems are wholly allegorical; and in this view it is easier to defend Homer, than to blame him. We cannot accuse him for making mention of many gods, for his bestowing passions upon them, or even introducing them fighting against men. The Scripture uses the like figures and expressions.

^a Of the machinery.

If it be allowable to speak thus of the gods in theology, much more in the fictions of natural philosophy, where, if a poet describes the deities, he must give them such manners, speeches, and actions, as are conformable to the nature of the things they represent under those divinities. The case is the same in the morals of the deities: Minerva is wise because she represents prudence; Venus is both good or bad, because the passion of love is capable of these contrary qualities.

Since among the gods of a poem some are good, some bad, and some indifferently either; and since of our passions we make so many allegorical deities; we may attribute to the gods all that is done in the poem, whether good or evil. But these deities do not act constantly in one and the same manner.

Sometimes they act invisibly, and by mere inspiration; which has nothing in it extraordinary or miraculous: being no more than what we say every day, ‘That some god has assisted us, or some dæmon has instigated us.’

At other times they appear visibly, and manifest themselves to men, in a manner altogether miraculous and preternatural.

The third way has something of both the others; it is in truth a miracle, but is not commonly so accounted: this includes dreams, oracles, &c.

All these ways must be probable; for however necessary the marvellous is to the epic action, as nothing is so conducive to admiration; yet we can, on the other hand, admire nothing, that we think impossible. Though

the probability of these machines be of a very large extent (since it is founded upon divine power), it is not without limitations. There are numerous instances of allowable and probable machines in the epic poem, where the gods are no less actors than the men. But the less credible sort, such as metamorphoses, &c. are far more rare.

This suggests a reflection on the method of rendering those machines probable, which in their own nature are hardly so. Those which require only divine probability, should be so disengaged from the action, that one might subtract them from it, without destroying the action. But those which are essential and necessary, should be grounded upon human probability, and not on the sole power of God. Thus the episodes of *Circe*, the *Syrens*, *Polyphemus*, &c. are necessary to the action of the *Odyssey*, and yet not humanly probable: yet Homer has artificially reduced them to human probability, by the simplicity and ignorance of the *Phæacians*, before whom he causes those recitals to be made.

The next question is, Where, and on what occasions, machines may be used? It is certain Homer and Virgil make use of them every where, and scarce suffer any action to be performed without them. Petronius makes this a precept: '*Per ambages, deorumque ministeria, &c.*' The gods are mentioned in the very proposition of their works, the invocation is addressed to them, and the whole narration is full of them. The gods are the causes of the action, they form the intrigue,

and bring about the solution. The precept of Aristotle and Horace, that the unravelling of the plot should not proceed from a miracle, or the appearance of a god, has place only in dramatic poetry, not in the epic. For it is plain, that both in the solution of the *Iliad* and *Odyssey*, the gods are concerned: in the former, the deities meet to appease the anger of Achilles: Iris and Mercury are sent to that purpose, and Minerva eminently assists Achilles in the decisive combat with Hector. In the *Odyssey*, the same goddess fights close by Ulysses against the suitors, and concludes that peace betwixt him and the Ithacensians which completes the poem.

We may therefore determine, that a machine is not an invention to extricate the poet out of any difficulty which embarrasses him: but that the presence of a divinity, and some action surprising and extraordinary, are inserted into almost all the parts of his work, in order to render it more majestic and more admirable. But this mixture ought to be so made, that the machines might be retrenched, without taking any thing from the action: at the same time that it gives the readers a lesson of piety and virtue; and teaches them, that the most brave and the most wise can do nothing, and attain nothing great and glorious, without the assistance of heaven. Thus the machinery crowns the whole work, and renders it at once marvellous, probable, and moral.

THE
FIRST BOOK
OF THE
ODYSSEY.

THE ARGUMENT.

MINERVA'S DESCENT TO ITHACA.

THE poem opens within forty-eight days of the arrival of Ulysses in his dominions. He had now remained seven years in the island of Calypso, when the gods assembled in council, proposed the method of his departure from thence, and his return to his native country. For this purpose it is concluded to send Mercury to Calypso, and Pallas immediately descends to Ithaca. She holds a conference with Telemachus, in the shape of Mentès king of the Taphians; in which she advises him to take a journey, in quest of his father Ulysses, to Pylos and Sparta, where Nestor and Menelaus yet reigned; then, after having visibly displayed her divinity, disappears. The suitors of Penelope make great entertainments, and riot in her palace till night. Phemius sings to them the return of the Grecians, till Penelope puts a stop to the song. Some words arise between the suitors and Telemachus, who summons the council to ~~meet~~ the day following.



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BOOK I.

'THE man for wisdom's various arts renown'd,
Long exercis'd in woes, O muse! resound;
Who, when his arms had wrought the destin'd fall
Of sacred Troy, and raz'd her heav'n-built wall,
Wand'ring from clime to clime, observant stray'd,
Their manners noted, and their states survey'd. 6
On stormy seas unnumber'd toils he bore,
Safe with his friends to gain his natal shore:
Vain toils! their impious folly dar'd to prey
On herds devoted to the god of day; 10
The god, vindictive doom'd them never more
(Ah men unblest!) to touch that natal shore.
O snatch some portion of these acts from fate,
Celestial muse! and to our world relate.

Now at their native realms the Greeks arriv'd; 15
All who the wars of ten long years surviv'd,
And scap'd the perils of the gulfy main.
Ulysses, sole of all the victor train,
An exile from his dear paternal coast,
Deplor'd his absent queen, and empire lost. 20

Calypso in her caves constrain'd his stay
 With sweet, reluctant, amorous delay :
 In vain—for now the circling years disclose
 The day predestin'd to reward his woes.
 At length his Ithaca is giv'n by fate, 25
 Where yet new labours his arrival wait;
 At length their rage the hostile pow'rs restrain,
 All but the ruthless monarch of the main.
 But now the god, remote, a heav'nly guest,
 In Ethiopia grac'd the genial feast, 30
 (A race divided, whom with sloping rays
 The rising and descending sun surveys)
 There on the world's extremest verge, rever'd
 With hecatombs and pray'r in pomp preferr'd,
 Distant he lay; while in the bright abodes 35
 Of high Olympus Jove conven'd the gods:
 Th' assembly thus the sire supreme address,
 Egysthus' fate revolving in his breast,
 Whom young Orestes to the dreary coast
 Of Pluto sent, a blood-polluted ghost: 40

Perverse mankind! whose wills, created free,
 Charge all their woes on absolute decree;
 All to the dooming gods their guilt translate,

When to his lust Egysthus gave the rein, 45
 Did fate, or we, th' adult'rous act constrain?
 Did fate, or we, when great Atrides died,
 Urge the bold traitor to the regicide?
 Hermes I sent, while yet his soul remain'd
 Sincere from royal blood, and faith profan'd; 50
 To warn the wretch, that young Orestes, grown
 To manly years, should re-assert the throne.
 Yet impotent of mind, and uncontroll'd,
 He plung'd into the gulf which heav'n foretold.

Here paus'd the god; and pensive thus replies
 Minerva, graceful with her azure eyes: 56
 O thou! from whom the whole creation springs,
 The source of pow'r on earth deriv'd to kings!
 His death was equal to the direful deed;
 So may the man of blood be doom'd to bleed! 60
 But grief and rage alternate wound my breast
 For brave Ulysses, still by fate oppress'd.
 Amidst an isle, around whose rocky shore
 The forests murmur, and the surges roar,
 The blameless hero from his wish'd-for home 65
 A goddess guards in her enchanted dome.
 (Atlas her sire, to whose far-piercing eye
 The wonders of the deep expanded lie;

'Th' eternal columns which on earth he rears
 End in the starry vault, and prop the spheres.) 70
 By his fair daughter is the chief confin'd,
 Who soothes to dear delight his anxious mind:
 Successless all her soft caresses prove,
 To banish from his breast his country's love;
 To see the smoke from his lov'd palace rise, 75
 While the dear isle in distant prospect lies,
 With what contentment could he close his eyes?
 And will Omnipotence neglect to save
 The suffer^ging virtue of the wise and brave?
 Must he, whose altars on the Phrygian shore 80
 With frequent rites, and pure, avow'd thy pow'r,
 Be doom'd the worst of human ills to prove,
 Unbless'd, abandon'd to the wrath of Jove?

Daughter! what words have pass'd thy lips un-
 weigh'd?

(Replied the thund'rer to the martial maid) 85
 Deem not unjustly by my doom oppress
 Of human race the wisest and the best.
 Neptune, by pray'r repentant rarely won,
 Afflicts the chief, t' avenge his giant son,
 Whose visual orb Ulysses robb'd of light; 90
 Great Polypheme, of more than mortal might!

Him young Thoösa bore (the bright increase
 Of Phorcys, dreaded in the sounds and seas),
 Whom Neptune ey'd with bloom of beauty blest,
 And in his cave the yielding nymph comprest. 95
 For this, the god constrains the Greek to roam,
 A hopeless exile from his native home,
 From death alone exempt—but cease to mourn;
 Let all combine t' achieve his wish'd return:
 Neptune aton'd, his wrath shall now refrain, 100
 Or thwart the synod of the gods in vain.

Father and king ador'd! Minerva cry'
 Since all who in th' Olympian bow'r reside
 Now make the wand'ring Greek their public care,
 Let Hermes to th' Atlantic isle repair; 105
 Bid him, arriv'd in bright Calypso's court,
 The sanction of th' assembled pow'rs report:
 That wise Ulysses to his native land
 Must speed, obedient to their high command.
 Meantime Telemachus, the blooming heir 110
 Of sea-girt Ithaca, demands my care:
 'Tis mine, to form his green, unpractis'd, years,
 In sage debates; surrounded with his peers,
 To save the state; and timely to restrain
 The bold intrusion of the suitor-train; 115

Who crowd his palace, and with lawless pow'r
 His herds and flocks in feastful rites devour.
 To distant Sparta, and the spacious waste
 Of sandy Pyle, the royal youth shall haste. 119
 There, warm with filial love, the cause inquire
 That from his realm retards his godlike sire:
 Deliv'ring early to the voice of fame
 The promise of a great, immortal, name.

She said: the sandals of celestial mould, 124
 Fledg'd with ambrosial plumes, and rich with gold,
 Surround her feet: with these sublime she sails
 Th' aërial space, and mounts the winged gales:
 O'er earth and ocean wide prepar'd to soar,
 Her dreaded arm a beamy jav'lin bore, 129
 Pond'rous and vast; which, when her fury burns,
 Proud tyrants humbles, and whole hosts o'erturns.
 From high Olympus prone her flight she bends,
 And in the realm of Ithaca descends.
 Her lineaments divine, the grave disguise
 Of Mentès' form conceal'd from human eyes: 135
 (Mentes, the monarch of the Taphian land)
 A glitt'ring spear wav'd awful in her hand.
 There in the portal plac'd, the heav'n-born maid

On hides of beeves, before the palace-gate, 140
 (Sad spoils of luxury) the suitors sat.
 With rival art, and ardour in their mien,
 At chess they vie, to captivate the queen;
 Dying of their loves. Attending nigh,
 A menial train the flowing bowl supply: 145
 Others, apart, the spacious hall prepare,
 And form the costly feast with busy care.
 There young Telemachus, his bloomy face
 Glowing celestial sweet, with godlike grace
 Amid the circle shines: but hope and fear 150
 (Painful vicissitude!) his bosom tear.
 Now imag'd in his mind, he sees restor'd,
 In peace and joy, the people's rightful lord:
 The proud oppressors fly the vengeful sword.
 While his fond soul these fancied triumphs swell'd,
 The stranger-guest, the royal youth beheld, 156
 Griev'd that a visitant so long should wait
 Unmark'd, unhonour'd, at a monarch's gate;
 Instant he flew with hospitable haste,
 And the new friend with courteous air embrac'd.
 Stranger! whoe'er thou art, securely rest, 161
 Affianc'd in my faith, a friendly guest:
 Approach the dome, the social banquet share,
 And then the purpose of thy soul declare.

Thus affable and mild, the prince precedes,
 And to the dome th' unknown celestial leads. 166
 The spear receiving from her hand, he plac'd
 Against a column, fair with sculpture grac'd;
 Where seemly rang'd in peaceful order stood
 Ulysses' arms, now long disus'd to blood. 170
 He led the goddess to the sov'reign seat,
 Her feet supported with a stool of state;
 (A purple carpet spread the pavement wide)
 Then drew his seat, familiar, to her side;
 Far from the suitor-train, a brutal crowd, 175
 With insolence, and wine, elate and loud;
 Where the free guest, unnoted, might relate,
 If haply conscious, of his father's fate.
 The golden ew'r a maid obsequious brings,
 Replenish'd from the cool translucent springs;
 With copious water the bright vase supplies 181
 A silver laver, of capacious size:
 They wash. The tables in fair order spread,
 They heap the glitt'ring canisters with bread:
 Viands of various kinds allure the taste, 185
 Of choicest sort and savour, rich repast!
 Delicious wines th' attending herald brought;
 The gold gave lustre to the purple draught.

Lur'd with the vapour of the fragrant feast,
 In rush'd the suitors with voracious haste: 190
 Marshall'd in order due, to each a sew'r
 Presents, to bathe his hands, a radiant ew'r.
 Luxurious then they feast. Observant round
 Gay stripling youths the brimming goblets
 crown'd. 194

The rage of hunger quell'd; they all advance,
 And form to measur'd airs the mazy dance.
 To Phemius was consign'd the chorded lyre,
 Whose hand reluctant touch'd the warbling wire:
 Phemius, whose voice divine could sweetest sing
 High strains, responsive to the vocal string. 200

Meanwhile, in whispers to his heav'nly guest
 His indignation thus the prince exprest:
 Indulge my rising grief, whilst these (my friend)
 With song and dance the pompous revel end.
 Light is the dance, and doubly sweet the lays,
 When, for the dear delight, another pays. 206
 His treasur'd stores these cormorants consume,
 Whose bones, defrauded of a regal tomb
 And common turf, lie naked on the plain,
 Or doom'd to welter in the whelming main. 210
 Should he return, that troop so blithe and bold,

Precipitant in fear, would wing their flight,
 And curse their cumb'rous pride's unwieldy weight.
 But ah I dream!—th' appointed hour is fled, 215
 And hope, too long with vain delusion fed,
 Deaf to the rumour of fallacious fame,
 Gives to the roll of death his glorious name!
 With venial freedom let me now demand
 Thy name, thy lineage, and paternal land: 220
 Sincere, from whence began thy course, recite,
 And to what ship I owe the friendly freight?
 Now first to me this visit dost thou deign,
 Or number'd in my father's social train?
 All who deserv'd his choice he made his own, 225
 And curious much to know, he far was known.

My birth I boast (the blue-ey'd virgin cries)
 From great Anchialus, renown'd and wise:
 Mentès my name; I rule the Taphian race,
 Whose bounds the deep circumfluent waves em-
 brace: 230

A duteous people, and industrious isle,
 To naval arts inur'd, and stormy toil.
 Freightèd with iron from my native land,
 I steer my voyage to the Brutian strand;
 To gain by commerce, for the labour'd mass, 235
 A just proportion of refulgent brass.

Far from your capital, my ship resides
 At Reithrus, and secure at anchor rides ;
 Where waving groves on airy Neion grow,
 Supremely tall, and shade the deeps below. 240
 Thence to revisit your imperial dome,
 An old hereditary guest I come :
 Your father's friend. Laertes can relate
 Our faith unspotted, and its early date ;
 Who prest with heart-corroding grief and years,
 To the gay court a rural shed prefers, 246
 Where, sole of all his train, a matron sage
 Supports with homely food his drooping age ;
 With feeble steps from marshalling his vines
 Returning sad, when toilsome day declines. 250
 With friendly speed, induc'd by erring fame,
 To hail Ulysses' safe return I came :
 But still the frown of some celestial pow'r
 With envious joy retards the blissful hour.
 Let not your soul be sunk in sad despair ; 255
 He lives, he breathes this heav'nly vital air,
 Among a savage race, whose shelfy bounds
 With ceaseless roar the foaming deep surrounds.
 The thoughts which roll within my ravish'd breast,
 To me, no seer, th' inspiring gods suggest ; 260

Nor skill'd, nor studious, with prophetic eye
 To judge the winged omens of the sky.
 Yet hear this certain speech, nor deem it vain;
 Though adamantine bonds the chief restrain,
 The dire restraint his wisdom will defeat, 265
 And soon restore him to his regal seat.
 But, gen'rous youth! sincere and free declare,
 Are you, of manly growth, his royal heir?
 For sure Ulysses in your look appears,
 The same his features, if the same his years. 270
 Such was that face, on which I dwelt with joy
 Ere Greece assembled stemm'd the tides to Troy;
 But parting then for that detested shore,
 Our eyes unhappy! never greeted more.

To prove a genuine birth (the prince replies)
 On female truth assenting faith relies; 276
 Thus manifest of right, I build my claim
 Sure-founded on a fair maternal fame,
 Ulysses' son: but happier he whom fate
 Hath plac'd beneath the storms which toss the great!
 Happier the son whose hoary sire is blest 281
 With humble affluence, and domestic rest!
 Happier than I, to future empire born,
 But doom'd a father's wretched fate to mourn!

To whom, with aspect mild, the guest divine :
 O true descendant of a sceptred line ! 286

The gods, a glorious fate, from anguish free,
 To chaste Penelope's increase decree.

But say, yon jovial troop so gaily drest,
 Is this a bridal or a friendly feast? 290

Or from their deed I rightlier may divine,
 Unseemly flown with insolence and wine ;
 Unwelcome revellers, whose lawless joy
 Pains the sage ear, and hurts the sober eye?

Magnificence of old (the prince replied) 295
 Beneath our roof with virtue could reside ;
 Unblam'd abundance crown'd the royal board,
 What time this dome rever'd her prudent lord ;
 Who now (so heav'n decrees) is doom'd to mourn,
 Bitter constraint ! erroneous and forlorn. 300

Better the chief, on Ilion's hostile plain,
 Had fall'n surrounded with his warlike train ;
 Or safe return'd, the race of glory past,
 New to his friends' embrace, had breath'd his last !
 Then grateful Greece with streaming eyes would
 raise 305

Historic marbles, to record his praise ;
 His praise, eternal on the faithful stone,
 Had with transmissive honour grac'd his son.

Now snatch'd by harpies to the dreary coast,
 Sunk is the hero, and his glory lost: 310

Vanish'd at once! unheard of, and unknown!
 And I his heir in misery alone.

Nor for a dear lost father only flow
 The filial tears, but woe succeeds to woe: 314

To tempt the spouseless queen with am'rous wiles,
 Resort the nobles from the neighbouring isles;

From Samos, circled with th' Ionian main,

Dulichium, and Zacynthus' sylvan reign:

E'en with presumptuous hope her bed t' ascend,
 The lords of Ithaca their right pretend. 320

She seems attentive to their pleaded vows,

Her heart detesting what her ear allows.

They, vain expectants of the bridal hour,

My stores in riotous expence devour,

In feast and dance the mirthful months employ,

And meditate my doom, to crown their joy. 326

With tender pity touch'd, the goddess cry'd:

Soon may kind heav'n a sure relief provide,

Soon may your sire discharge the vengeance due,

And all your wrongs the proud oppressors rue!

Oh! in that portal should the chief appear, 331

Each hand tremendous with a brazen spear

In radiant panoply his limbs incas'd;
 For so of old my father's court he grac'd,
 When social mirth unbent his serious soul, 335
 O'er the full banquet, and the sprightly bowl.
 He then from Ephyré, the fair domain
 Of Ilus, sprung from Jason's royal strain,
 Measur'd a length of seas, a toilsome length, in
 vain.

For voyaging to learn the direful art 340
 To taint with deadly drugs the barbed dart;
 Observant of the gods, and sternly just,
 Ilus refus'd t' impart the baneful trust:
 With friendlier zeal my father's soul was fir'd,
 The drugs he knew, and gave the boon desir'd.
 Appear'd he now with such heroic port, 346
 As then conspicuous at the Taphian court;
 Soon should yon boasters cease their haughty strife,
 Or each atone his guilty love with life,
 But of his wish'd return the care resign; 350
 Be future vengeance to the pow'rs divine.

My sentence hear: with stern distaste avow'd,
 To their own districts drive the suitor-crowd:
 When next the morning warms the purple east,
 Convoke the peerage, and the gods attest; 355

The sorrows of your inmost soul relate;
 And form sure plans to save the sinking state.
 Should second love a pleasing flame inspire,
 And the chaste queen connubial rites require;
 Dismiss'd with honour, let her hence repair 360
 To great Icarius, whose paternal care
 Will guide her passion, and reward her choice
 With wealthy dow'r, and bridal gifts of price.
 Then let this dictate of my love prevail:
 Instant, to foreign realms prepare to sail, 365
 To learn your father's fortunes: fame may prove,
 Or omen'd voice (the messenger of Jove),
 Propitious to the search. Direct your toil
 Through the wide ocean first to sandy Pyle;
 Of Nestor, hoary sage, his doom demand: 370
 Then speed your voyage to the Spartan strand;
 For young Atrides to th' Achaian coast
 Arriv'd the last of all the victor host.
 If yet Ulysses views the light, forbear,
 Till the fleet hours restore the circling year: 375
 But if his soul hath wing'd the destin'd flight,
 Inhabitant of deep disastrous night;
 Homeward with pious speed repass the main,
 To the pale shade funereal rites ordain,

Plant the fair column o'er the vacant grave, 380

A hero's honours let the hero have.

With decent grief the royal dead deplor'd,

For the chaste queen select an equal lord.

Then let revenge your daring mind employ,

By fraud or force the suitor-train destroy, 385

And, starting into manhood, scorn the boy.

Hast thou not heard how young Orestes, fir'd

With great revenge, immortal praise acquir'd?

His virgin sword, Egysthus' veins imbrued;

The murd'rer fell, and blood aton'd for blood. 390

O greatly bless'd with ev'ry blooming grace!

With equal steps the paths of glory trace;

Join to that royal youth's your rival name,

And shine eternal in the sphere of fame.—

But my associates now my stay deplore, 395

Impatient on the hoarse-resounding shore.

Thou, heedful of advice, secure proceed;

My praise the precept is, be thine the deed.

The counsel of my friend (the youth rejoin'd)

Imprints conviction on my grateful mind. 400

So fathers speak (persuasive speech and mild)

Their sage experience to the fav'rite child.

But, since to part, for sweet refection due

The genial viands let my train renew;

And the rich pledge of plighted faith receive,
 Worthy the heir of Ithaca to give. 406

Defer the promis'd boon (the goddess cries,
 Celestial azure bright'ning in her eyes)
 And let me now regain the Reithrian port:
 From Temesé return'd, your royal court 410
 I shall revisit; and that pledge receive;
 And gifts, memorial of our friendship, leave.

Abrupt, with eagle-speed she cut the sky;
 Instant invisible to mortal eye.
 Then first he recognis'd th' ethereal guest: 415
 Wonder and joy alternate fire his breast;
 Heroic thoughts, infus'd, his heart dilate:
 Revolving much his father's doubtful fate,
 At length, compos'd, he join'd the suitor-throng;
 Hush'd in attention to the warbled song. 420
 His tender theme the charming lyrist chose
 Minerva's anger, and the direful woes
 Which voyaging from Troy the victors bore,
 While storms vindictive intercept the shore.
 The shrilling airs the vaulted roof rebounds, 425
 Reflecting to the queen the silver sounds.
 With grief renew'd the weeping fair descends;
 Their sov'reign's step a virgin train attends:

A veil of richest texture wrought, she wears,
And silent to the joyous hall repairs. 430

There from the portal, with her mild command
Thus gently checks the minstrel's tuneful hand:

Phemius! let acts of gods and heroes old,
What ancient bards in hall and bow'r have told,
Attemper'd to the lyre, your voice employ; 435
Such the pleas'd ear will drink with silent joy.

But oh! forbear that dear disastrous name,
To sorrow sacred, and secure of fame:
My bleeding bosom sickens at the sound;
And ev'ry piercing note inflicts a wound. 440

Why, dearest object of my duteous love,
(Replied the prince) will you the bard reprove?
Oft', Joye's ethereal rays (resistless fire)
The chanter's soul and raptur'd song inspire;
Instinct divine! nor blame, severe, his choice, 445
Warbling the Grecian woes with harp and voice:
For novel lays attract our ravish'd ears;
But old, the mind with inattention hears:
Patient permit the sadly-pleasing strain;
Familiar now with grief, your tears refrain, 450
And in the public woe forget your own;
You weep not for a perish'd lord, alone.

What Greeks, now wand'ring in the Stygian gloom,
With your Ulysses shar'd an equal doom!

Your widow'd hours, apart, with female toil 455
And various labours of the loom, beguile;
There rule, from palace-cares remote and free;
That care to man belongs, and most to me.

Mature beyond his years, the queen admires
His sage reply, and with her train retires. 460
Then swelling sorrows burst their former bounds,
With echoing grief afresh the dome resounds;
Till ^{the} _I ^{as,} Pallas, piteous of her plaintive cries,
In slumber clos'd her silver-streaming eyes.

Meantime, rekindled at the royal charms, 465
Tumultuous love each beating bosom warms;
Intemp'rate rage a wordy war began;
But bold Telemachus assum'd the man.
Instant (he cried) your female discord end,
Ye deedless boâsters! and the song attend; 470
Obey that sweet compulsion, nor profane
With dissonance the smooth melodious strain.
Pacific now prolong the jovial feast;
But when the dawn reveals the rosy east,
I to the peers assembled shall propose 475
The firm resolve, I hereto few disclose.

No longer live the cankers of my court;
 All to your sev'ral states with speed resort;
 Waste in wild riot what your land allows,
 There ply the early feast, and late carouse. 480
 But if, to honour lost, 'tis still decreed
 For you my bowl shall flow, my flock shall bleed;
 Judge and revenge my right, impartial Jove!—
 By him and all th' immortal thrones above,
 (A sacred oath) each proud oppressor, slain, 485
 Shall with inglorious gore this marble stain!

Aw'd by the prince, thus haughty, bold, and
 young,

Rage gnaw'd the lip, and wonder chain'd the tongue.
 Silence at length the gay Antinous broke,
 Constrain'd a smile, and thus ambiguous spoke:
 What god to your untutor'd youth affords 491
 This headlong torrent of amazing words?
 May Jove delay thy reign, and cumber late
 So bright a genius with the toils of state!

Those toils (Telemachus, serene, replies) 495
 Have charms, with all their weight, t'allure the wise.
 Fast by the throne obsequious fame resides,
 And wealth incessant rolls her golden tides.
 Nor let Antinous rage, if strong desire
 Of wealth and fame a youthful bosom fire: 500

Elect by Jove his delegate of sway,
 With joyous pride the summons I'd obey.
 Whene'er Ulysses roams the realm of night,
 Should factious pow'r dispute my lineal right,
 Some other Greeks a fairer claim may plead; 505
 To your pretence their title would precede.
 At least, the sceptre lost, I still should reign
 Sole o'er my vassals, and domestic train.

To this Eurymachus: To heav'n alone
 Refer the choice to fill the vacant throne. 510
 Your patrimonial stores in peace possess;
 Undoubted all your filial claim confess:
 Your private right should impious pow'r invade,
 The peers of Ithaca would arm in aid. 514
 But say, that stranger-guest who late withdrew,
 What and from whence? his name and lineage shew.
 His grave demeanour, and majestic grace,
 Speak him descended of no vulgar race:
 Did he some loan of ancient right require,
 Or came forerunner of your sceptred sire? 520

O son of Polybus! the prince replies,
 No more my sire will glad these longing eyes:
 The queen's fond hope inventive rumour cheers,
 Or vain diviners' dreams divert her fears.

That stranger-guest the Taphian realm obeys,
 A realm defended with encircling seas. 526
 Mentes, an ever-honour'd name, of old
 High in Ulysses' social list enroll'd.

Thus he, tho' conscious of th' ethereal guest,
 Answer'd evasive of the sly request. 530
 Meantime the lyre rejoins the sprightly lay;
 Love-dittied airs, and dance, conclude the day.
 But when the star of eve, with golden light
 Adorn'd the matron-brow of sable night;
 The mirthful train dispersing quit the court, 535
 And to their sev'ral domes to rest resort;
 A tow'ring structure to the palace join'd;
 To this his steps the thoughtful prince inclin'd;
 In his pavilion there, to sleep repairs;
 The lighted torch, the sage Euryclea bears: 540
 (Daughter of Ops, the just Pisenor's son,
 For twenty beeves by great Laertes won;
 In rosy prime with charms attractive grac'd,
 Honour'd by him, a gentle lord and chaste,
 With dear esteem: too wise, with jealous strife
 To taint the joys of sweet connubial life. 546
 Sole with Telemachus her service ends,
 A child she nurs'd him, and a man attends.)

Whilst to his couch himself the prince address,
The duteous dame receiv'd the purple vest: 550
The purple vest with decent care dispos'd,
The silver ring she pull'd, the door reclos'd;
The bolt, obedient to the silken cord,
To the strong staple's inmost depth restor'd, 554
Secur'd the valves. There, wrapt in silent shade,
Pensive, the rules the goddess gave, he weigh'd;
Stretch'd on the downy fleece, no rest he knows,
And in his raptur'd soul the vision glows.

SELECT NOTES

TO

BOOK I.

WE shall proceed in the same method through the course of these annotations upon the *Odyssey*, as those in the *Iliad*; considering Homer chiefly as a poet, endeavouring to make his beauties understood, and not to praise without a reason given. It is equally an extreme, on the one hand to think Homer has no human defects, and on the other to dwell so much upon those defects as to depreciate his beauties. The greater part of critics form a general character from the observation of particular errors, taken in their own oblique or imperfect views; which is as unjust as to make a judgment of the beauty of a man's body from the shadow it happens to cast, in such or such a position. To convince the reader of this intended impartiality, we readily allow the *Odyssey* to be inferior to the *Iliad* in many respects. It has not that sublimity of spirit, or that enthusiasm of poetry; but then it must be allowed, if it be less noble, it is more instructive: the other abounds with more heroism, this with more morality. The *Iliad* gives us a draught of gods and heroes, of discord, of contentions, and scenes of slaughter: the *Odyssey* sets before us a scene more amiable, the landscapes of nature, the pleasures of private life, the duties of every station, the hospitality of ancient times; a less busy, but more agreeable portrait. The *Iliad* concludes with the ruin, the *Odyssey* with the happiness of a nation. Horace was of the same opinion, as is evident from the epistle to Lollius:

‘Seditione, dolis, scelere, atque libidine, et ira,
Iliacos intra muros peccatur et extra.
Rursus, quid virtus et quid sapientia possit,
Utile proposuit nobis exemplar Ulyssem.’

V. 1. *The man for wisdom, &c.*] Homer opens this poem with the utmost simplicity and modesty; he continually grows upon the reader,

‘Non fumum ex fulgore, sed ex fumo dare lucem
Cogitat, ut speciosa dehinc miracula promat.’

Cicero lays this down as a rule for the orator, ‘Principia verecunda, non elatis intensa verbis;’ and Horace for the poet, ‘Nec sic incipies, &c.’ He proposes the beginning of the *Odyssey* as a pattern for all future poems, and has translated them in his *Art of Poetry*.

‘Dic mihi, musa, virum, captæ post tempora Trojæ,
Qui mores hominum multorum vidit, et urbes.’

May I be forgiven the arrogance, if I should offer a criticism upon this translation: the sufferings of Ulysses are the subject of the whole *Odyssey*, and yet Horace has omitted the mention of those sufferings: *ος μαλα πολλα πλავχθη*. There is another word also which seems essential, that is, *πολυτροπον*; this is likewise omitted: for the sufferings of Ulysses, and the wisdom by which he extricated himself from them, enter into the very design of the poem. But, indeed, in another place he has plainly had regard to all these circumstances.

‘Qui domitor Trojæ, multorum providus urbes
Et mores hominum inspexit, latumque per æquor
Dum sibi, dum sociis, reditum parat, aspera multa
Pertulit’———
EPIST. ad LOLI.

I must also refute a criticism of Rapin, who will have it that the word *πολυτροπον* includes a character of craft and low cunning, unworthy of a brave spirit. But Eustathius admirably vindicates the poet in this respect; he shews us that *τροπον* no where in Homer signifies (*ηθην*) or morals; and that it implies a man who could accommodate himself to every condition in life; one who in the worst estate had still a reserve to free himself from it; it therefore, says he, signifies a man that through experience has

learned wisdom. I have likewise the authority of Horace for this sense, in the above-cited passage,

‘ Qui domitor Trojæ, multorum providus urbes.’

I take providus in this place to signify not only a man who noted the manners of various nations with care, but also one who in calamity could foresee methods to extricate himself from it. And surely nothing can be more unjust than what Rapin objects against Ulysses, in employing his wisdom only in his own preservation, while all his companions were lost: Homer himself sufficiently refutes this objection, and directly tells us, that he employed his wisdom in the care of their safety, but that they through their folly defeated his wisdom. The words of Homer, says Eustathius, shew that a wise man neglects not his friends in adversity. But, says Rapin, what could oblige Homer to begin with so dishonourable an action, and place the greatest weakness of his hero in the very frontispiece of his poem? and invoke his muse to sing the man who with difficulty saved himself, and suffered his companions to be destroyed? There had been some weight in this objection, if Ulysses had saved his own, with the loss of their lives; but I cannot see any dishonour in his preserving himself by wisdom, when they destroyed themselves by folly: it was chiefly by storms that they perished; it can be no imputation to his character, not to be able to restrain the effects of a tempest: he did all that a wise man could do, he gave them such admonitions upon every emergency, that if they had pursued them, they had been preserved as well as Ulysses.

V. 1. *For wisdom's various arts renown'd.*] Bossu's observations in relation to this epithet *πολυτροπον*, given to Ulysses, is worth transcribing. The fable of the Odyssey (says he) is wholly for the conduct and policy of a state: therefore the quality it requires is wisdom; but this virtue is of too large an extent for the simplicity which a just and precise character requires; it is therefore requisite it should be limited. The great art of kings is the mystery of dissimulation. It is well known, that Lewis the Eleventh, for the instruction of his son, reduced all the Latin language to these words only, viz. ‘ Qui nescit dissimulare nescit

regnare.' It was likewise by this practice that Saul began his reign, when he was first elected, and as yet full of the spirit of God. The first thing we read of in holy writ is, that * he made as if he did not hear the words which seditious people spoke against him.

This then is the character which the Greek poet gives his Ulysses in the proposition of his poem; he calls him *ανδρα πολυτροπον*, to denote this prudent dissimulation, which disguised him so many ways, and put him upon taking so many shapes.

Without any thing having been mentioned of Circe, who detained him with her a whole year, and who was famous for the transformations she made of all sorts of persons, the reader finds him at first with Calypso the daughter of wise Atlas, who bore up the vast pillars that reached from earth to heaven, and whose knowledge penetrated into the depths of the unfathomable ocean; that is to say, who was ignorant of nothing in heaven, earth, or sea. And as the first product and principal part of so high, so solid, and so profound a knowledge, was to know how to conceal one's self; this wise man called his daughter by a name that signified a secret.† The poet makes his hero, whom he designed for a politician, to stay seven whole years with this nymph. She taught him so well, that afterwards he lost no opportunity of putting her lessons in practice; for he does nothing without a disguise. At his parting from Ogygia he is cast upon the island of Phæacia: as kind as his reception was, yet he stays till the night before he went off, ere he would discover himself. From thence he goes to Ithaca: the first adventure that happened to him there was with Minerva, the most prudent among the deities, as Ulysses was the most prudent among men. She says so expressly in that very passage. Nor did they fail to disguise themselves. Minerva takes upon her the shape of a shepherd, and Ulysses tells her he was obliged to fly from Crete, because he had murdered the son of king Idomeneus. The goddess discovers herself first, and commends him particularly, because these artifices

* *Ille vero dissimulabat se audire.* REG. lib. 1.

† *Καλυπτήτις.*

were so easy and natural to him, that they seemed to be born with him. Afterwards the hero, under the form of a beggar, deceives first of all Eumeus, then his son, and last of all his wife and every body else, till he found an opportunity of punishing his enemies, to whom he discovered not himself till he killed them, namely, on the last night. After his discovering himself in the palace, he goes the next day to deceive his father, appearing at first under a borrowed name; before he would give him joy of his return. Thus he takes upon him all manner of shapes, and dissembles to the very last. But the poet joins to this character a valour and a constancy which render him invincible in the most daring and desperate adventures.

V. 3. *Who, when his arms had wrought the destin'd fall
Of sacred Troy.]*

Whence is it that Ulysses is said to have overthrown Troy? and not Achilles, who was of more remarkable courage than Ulysses? Eustathius tells us, that the destruction of Troy ought to be ascribed chiefly to Ulysses, as he not only took away the Palladium, but was the inventor of the stratagem of the wooden horse, by which that city was conquered. Virgil, in his second book of the *Æneid*, gives us a noble description of its destruction, by which we find that Ulysses was not only the contriver of its ruin, but bore a great share in the actions of the night in which that city was overturned.

V. 15. *Now at their native realms the Greeks arriv'd.]* It is necessary for the better understanding of the poem to fix the period of time from which it takes its beginning: Homer, as Eustathius observes, does not begin with the wanderings of Ulysses; he steps at once into the latter end of his actions, and leaves the preceding story to be told by way of narration. Thus in his *Iliad*, he dates his poem from the anger of Achilles, which happened almost at the conclusion of the Trojan war. From hence Horace drew his observation in his *Arte Poet*.

‘Semper ad eventum festinat: et in medias res

Non secus ac notas, auditorem rapit.’

There are but forty-eight days from the departure of Ulysses from Calypso, to his discovery in Ithaca; he had been one year with Circe, and seven with Calypso, when the gods dispatched Mercury to that goddess; from which point of time we are to date the Odyssey.

This observation gives a reason why the poet invokes the muse to recount the wanderings of this hero in part only; for Ulysses, as appears from the beginning of the ninth book, after he left the shores of Troy, was driven to Ismarus of the Ciconians. An historian must have begun from the fall of Troy, and related his wanderings with truth and order; for history is chiefly for instruction: but a poet takes another method, and disposes every circumstance arbitrarily; he chooses or rejects, as suits best with his principal design, and in such a manner as to give at once delight and instruction.

V. 21. *Calypso in her caves constrain'd his stay.*] To the remark before cited of Bossu, upon the abode of Ulysses with Calypso, may be added this of the abbé Fraguier: that his residing seven years in the caves of Calypso (the goddess of secrecy) may only mean that he remained so long hid from the knowledge and inquiry of all men; or that whatever befel him in all that time, was lost to history, or made no part in the poem.

V. 28. *All but the ruthless monarch of the main.*] It may be asked why Neptune is thus enraged against Ulysses? Homer himself tells us, because that hero had put out the eye of his son Cyclops. But if we take Neptune by way of allegory for the ocean, the passage implies, that the sufferings of Ulysses were chiefly by sea; and therefore poetry, which adds a grandeur to the meanest circumstance, introduces the god of it as his greatest enemy. EUSTATHIUS.

V. 30. *In Ethiopia, &c.*] Strabo in his first book delivers his opinion, that 'the ancient Grecians included all those people who lived upon the southern ocean, from east to west, in the general name of Ethiopians, and that it was not confined to those only who lay south of Egypt.' Ptolemy says, 'that under the zodiac, from east to west, inhabit the Ethiopians, black of colour.' And elsewhere the same geographer divides Ethiopia into

the eastern and the western. These eastern and western Ethiopians were separated by the Arabian or Egyptian gulf; which, though never mentioned by Homer, as Aristarchus remarked, yet it is not probable (says Strabo) that he should be ignorant of it, it being but a thousand stadia distant from the Mediterranean, when he knew the Egyptian Thebes, which was four times as far off. STRAB. PLIN. SPONDAN.

I will not repeat what was observed upon the gods being gone to the Ethiopians, in the first book of the Iliad; it is sufficient in general to observe, that the Ethiopians were a people very religious towards the gods, and that they held a pompous feast twelve days annually to their honour; and in particular, that the poet very judiciously makes use of this solemnity to remove Neptune out of the way, who was the enemy of Ulysses, that he may with the greater security bring off his hero from Calypso's island. EUSTATHIUS.

V. 41. *Jupiter's speech.*] The solemnity and sententiousness of this speech is taken notice of by Eustathius; and surely poetry must be highly valuable, when it delivers such excellent instructions. It contained the whole of religion among the ancients; and made philosophy more agreeable. This passage is an instance of it, a passage worthy of a Christian; it shews us that the Supreme Being is sovereignly good; that he rewards the just, and punishes the unjust; and that the folly of man, and not the decree of heaven, is the cause of human calamity.

V. 45. *Egysthus.*] It is difficult to find a reason why, in the original, Jupiter should give such an honourable appellation to Egysthus, as ἀμύμων, unblamable, who had dishonoured the bed of Agamemnon, and taken his life away; especially in that very instant when he condemns the fact with so great solemnity: Eustathius says, that Homer, an enemy to censure and invective, introduces that god as having respect only to his good qualities, and commending him for his general character; and adds that it had been an indecency in the poet to have given countenance to that base custom by the authority of Jupiter. Dacier is not satisfied with this reason, and tells us that Homer gives Egysthus this title, to vindicate Jupiter from the imputation of

his crimes: he gives us to understand that heaven is not the cause of men's failings; that he is by creation able to act virtuously; and that it is through his own misconduct that he deviates into evil; and therefore the meaning is this: 'Jupiter calling to mind Egysthus, that Egysthus whom he had created wise and virtuous, and made capable to sustain that character.' And this agrees admirably with the beginning of the speech of Jupiter, who there vindicates his own divinity.

But if this should seem too refined, it may be sufficient to take the word in that good sense which Egysthus might have deserved for many good qualities: thus Achilles is called the swift of foot, even when he stands, or sleeps; the first being his general character. It may be further confirmed by a passage something resembling it in the Holy Scriptures: the Egyptian midwives were guilty of a lie to Pharaoh, and yet God pardons it, and blesses them: he blesses them not because they lied, but because they preserved the children of the Israelites.

V. 49. *Hermes I sent, &c.*] It would be endless to observe every moral passage in the Odyssey, the whole of it being but one lesson of morality. But surely it must be a pleasure to the reader to learn what notions the ancients had of a deity, from the oldest book extant, except the book of Moses.

Jupiter here declares that he never fails to warn mankind from evil, and that he had sent Mercury for this purpose to Egysthus. It may be asked what is this Mercury whom Jupiter sends? It is the light of nature, which heaven implants in the breast of every man: and which, as Cicero says, is not only more ancient than the world, but coeval with the Master of the world himself. He writes to this effect: 'There was from the beginning such a thing as reason, a direct emanation from nature itself, which prompted to good, and averted from evil. A reason which did not then become a law, when it was first reduced to writing, but was so even from the moment it existed, and it existed from ever, of an equal date with the divine intelligence: it is the true and primordial law, proper to command and to forbid, it is the reason of the great Jupiter.'

That reason of the Supreme Being is here called Mercury;

that reason flowing from God, which is constantly dictating to the most corrupted hearts, 'this is good,' or 'this is evil.' Hence arose an ancient proverb, recorded by Simplicius, 'Reason is a Mercury to all men.' Epictetus [lib. iii. Arrian.] says, 'Apollo knew that Laius would not obey his oracle. Apollo nevertheless did not neglect to prophesy to Laius those evils that threatened him. The goodness of the divinity never fails to advertise mankind; that source of truth is ever open and free: but men are ever incredulous, disobedient, and rebellious.' DACIER.

V. 57. *Minerva's speech.*] It may be asked what relation Ulysses has to Egysthus, that the mention of the one should immediately give occasion for the remembrance of the other? And it may appear unnatural in the poet to give rise to his poem by so unexpected a transition from Egysthus to Ulysses. Eustathius vindicates Homer, by shewing that it is not only beautiful but natural, to take rise from what offers itself to our immediate observation. What can be more natural, when Jupiter is relating how he punishes the wicked, than for Wisdom or Minerva to suggest, that the good ought to be rewarded? There is no forced introduction, no artful preparation; but the whole arises from the occasion, which is a great beauty. EUSTATHIUS.

V. 63. *Amidst an isle, &c.*] There was, according to true history, such an island of Calypso; of which Strabo writes, that Solon gives an account of the island Atlantis bordering upon Egypt, and that he went thither to make inquiry, and learned that an island was once there, but by time was vanished. EUSTATHIUS.

V. 84. *Daughter! what words, &c.*] This verse is frequently repeated both in the Iliad and the Odyssey; it has here a particular energy. Jupiter reproves Minerva for supposing he could ever be unmindful of an hero so pious as Ulysses. It is spoken with vehemence; an instance, says Eustathius, that it is not only equitable, but an attribute of divinity, for rulers to remember those who serve them faithfully.

V. 89. *T'avenge his giant son.*] It is artful in the poet to tell the reader the occasion of the sufferings of Ulysses in the opening of the poem; it is a justice due to his character, to shew that his

misfortunes are not the consequence of his crimes, but the effect of Neptune's anger.

It is observable, that Homer does not stop to explain how Ulysses put out the eye of the Cyclops: he hastens forward into the middle of his poem, and leaves that for the future narration of Ulysses.

V. 110. *Meantime Telemachus demands my care, &c.*] Rapin has raised several objections against this piece of conduct in Homer: he tells us that the action of the Odyssey is imperfect, that it begins with the voyages of Telemachus, and ends with those of Ulysses: that the four first books are all concerning Telemachus: that his voyage bears no proportion to that of Ulysses: that it contributes nothing to his return, which is brought about by Jupiter, and the assistance of the Phæacians: that this gave occasion to Beni in his Academical Discourses to assert, that the fable of the Odyssey is double: that the four first books of it are neither episode, nor part of an action, nor have any connexion with the rest of the work.

I am of opinion, that these objections are made with too great severity; the destruction of the suitors is the chief hinge upon which the poem turns, as it contributes chiefly to the re-establishment of Ulysses in his country and regality; and whatever contributes to this end, contributes to the principal action, and is of a piece with the rest of the poem: and that this voyage does so is evident, in that it gives a defeat to the suitors, and controuls their insolence; it preserves Ulysses's throne and bed inviolate, in that it gives Telemachus courage to resist their attempts; it sets his character in a fair point of light, who is the second personage of the poem, and is to have a great share in the future actions of it.

Eustathius judiciously observes, that Homer here prepares the way for the defeat of the suitors, the chief design of his poem; and lays the ground-work of probability on which he intends to build his poem, and reconcile it to the rules of credibility.

If it be asked for what end this voyage of Telemachus is made; the answer is, to inquire after Ulysses: so that whatever episodes are interwoven, Ulysses is still in view; and whatever

Telemachus acts, is undertaken solely upon his account; and consequently, whatever is acted, contributes to the principal design, the restoration of Ulysses. So that the fable is entire, and the action not double.

It is to be remembered also, that the sufferings of Ulysses are the subject of the poem; his personal calamities are not only intended, but his domestic misfortunes; and by this conduct Homer shews us the extent of his misfortunes: his queen is attempted, his throne threatened, and his wealth consumed in riot; Ulysses suffers in Telemachus, and, in every circumstance of life is unhappy.

V. 112. *'Tis mine, to form his green, unpractis'd years, &c.]*
In this the poet draws the outlines of what he is to fill up in the four subsequent books: and nothing can give us a greater idea of his unbounded invention, than his building upon so plain a foundation such a noble superstructure: he entertains us with variety of episodes, historical relations, and manners of those ancient times: it must be confessed, that the characters in the Odyssey, and the number of the chief actors, are but few; and yet the poet never tires: he varies and diversifies the story so happily, that he is continually opening new scenes to engage our attention. He resembles his own Proteus, he is capable of all shapes, yet in all shapes the same deity.

V. 116. *To distant Sparta, and the spacious waste
Of sandy Pyle]*

Rapin is very severe upon this conduct. When Telemachus, says he, is to search for his father in the courts of Greece, he cannot make the least progress without Minerva; it is she who inspires his thoughts, and assists in the execution. Could not honour, duty, or nature, have moved his heart towards an absent father? The machine, adds he, has not the least appearance of probability, inasmuch as the goddess conducts him to every place, except only where Ulysses resides; of which she ought by no means to be ignorant, upon the account of her divinity.

But surely nothing can be more natural, than for a son, in order to gain intelligence of an absent father, to inquire in those

places, and of those persons, where and from whom he is most likely to have information. Such is the conduct of Telemachus : and poetry, which delights in the wonderful, because this conduct agrees with wisdom, ascribes it to Minerva the goddess of it. No doubt but Minerva knew where Ulysses resided : but men must act as men ; such an immediate interposition as Rapin requires, had stopped at once the fountain of the poet's invention. If what a poet invents be natural, it is justifiable ; and he may give the rein to his imagination, if he restrain it from running into extravagance and wildness.

V. 136. *Mentes, the monarch of the Taphian land.*] We are told by tradition, that Homer was so sensible of friendship, that to do honour to his particular friends, he immortalised their names in his poems. In the Iliad he has shewn his gratitude to Tychius ; and in the Odyssey, to Mentes, Phemius, and Mentor. This Mentes was a famous merchant of the isle of Leucade, who received Homer at Smyrna, and made him his companion in all his voyages. It is to this Mentes we owe the two poems of Homer ; for the poet in all probability had never wrote them without those lights and informations he received, and the discoveries he was enabled to make, by those travels. Homer is not contented to give his name to the kings of the Taphians, but feigns also that the goddess of wisdom chose to appear in his shape preferably to that of all the kings who were nearer neighbours to Ithaca. Eustathius thinks there might have been a real king of Taphos of this name, who was a friend to Ulysses. This may possibly be ; but I would choose to adhere rather to the old tradition, as it does honour to friendship. Dacier.

V. 139. *Enormous riot and misrule.*] This is the first appearance of the suitors ; and the poet has drawn their pictures in such colours as are agreeable to their characters through the whole poem. They are, as Horace expresses it,

‘ Fruges consumere nati,
Sponsi Penelopes, Nebulones’

The poet gives a fine contrast between them and Telemachus ; he entertains himself with his own thoughts, weighs the sum of

things, and beholds with a virtuous sorrow the disorders of the suitors: he appears (like Ulysses among his transformed companions in the tenth book) a wise man among brutes.

V. 143. *At chess they vie, to captivate the queen;
Divining of their loves. . . .]*

There are great disputes what this game was at which the suitors played. Athenæus relates it from Apian the grammarian, who had it from Cteson a native of Ithaca, that the sport was in this manner: The number of the suitors being one hundred and eight, they equally divided their men or balls; that is to say, fifty-four on each side; these were placed on the board opposite to each other. Between the two sides was a vacant space, in the midst of which was the main mark, or queen, the point which all were to aim at. They took their turns by lot; he who took or displaced that mark, got his own in its place; and if by a second man he again took it, without touching any of the others, he won the game; and it passed as an omen of obtaining his mistress. This principal mark, or queen, was called by whatever name the gamesters pleased; and the suitors gave it the name of Penelope.

It is said that this game was invented by Palamedes during the siege of Troy. [SOPHOCLES IN PALAM.] EUSTATHIUS. SPONDANUS. DACIER.

V. 157. *Griev'd that a visitant so long should wait.]* The reader will lose much of the pleasure of this poem, if he reads it without the reflection, that he peruses one of the most ancient books in the world: it sets before him persons, places, and actions, that existed three thousand years ago. Here we have an instance of the humanity of those early ages: Telemachus pays a reverence to this stranger, only because he is a stranger; he attends him in person, and welcomes him with all the openness of ancient hospitality.

V. 185, &c. *The feast describ'd.]* There is nothing that has drawn more ridicule upon Homer than the frequent descriptions of his entertainments: it has been judged, that he was more than ordinarily delighted with them, since he omits no opportunity to

describe them; nay, his temperance has not been unsuspected, according to that verse of Horace,

‘Laudibus arguitur vini vinosus Homerus.’

But we must not condemn without stronger evidence: a man may commend a sumptuous entertainment, or good wines, without being either a drunkard or a glutton. But since there are so many entertainments described in the poem, it may not be improper to give this some explanation.

They wash before the feast; perhaps, says Eustathius, because they always, at the feast, made libations to the gods. The ewer was of gold, the vessel from whence the water was poured of silver, and the cups out of which they drank were of gold.

A damsel attends Mentès, but heralds wait upon the suitors: Eustathius observes a decency in this conduct; the suitors were lewd debauchees, and consequently a woman of modesty would have been an improper attendant upon such a company. Beautiful youths attend the company in quality of cup-bearers.

A matron who has the charge of the household (*ταμην*) brings in the bread and the cold meats, for so Eustathius interprets *σιδαία*; an officer, whose employ it was to portion out the victuals, brings in the meats that furnished out the rest of the entertainment; and, after the feast, a bard diverts them with vocal and instrumental music.

Dacier is in great pain about the cold victuals; she is afraid lest the reader should think them the leavings of a former day: and tells us they might possibly be in the nature of our cold tongues, jambons, &c. But I think such fears to be groundless: we must have reference to the customs of those early ages; and if it was customary for cold meats to be served up (neither is it necessary to suppose them the leavings of the former entertainment) it can be no disgrace to the hospitality of Telemachus.

V. 197. *To Phemius was consign'd the chorded lyre.*] In ancient times princes entertained in their families certain learned and wise men, who were both poets and philosophers, and not only made it their business to amuse and delight, but to promote wisdom and morality. Ulysses, at his departure for Troy, left

one of these with Penelope: and it was usual to consign in this manner the care of their wives and families to the poets of those days, as appears from a signal passage in the third book, verse (of the original) 267, &c. To this man Homer gives the name of Phemius, to celebrate one of his friends, who was so called, and who had been his preceptor (says Eustathius). I must add one remark, that though he places his master here in no very good company, yet he guards his character from any imputation, by telling us, that he attended the suitors by compulsion. This is not only a great instance of his gratitude, but also of his tenderness and delicacy.

V. 225. *All who deserv'd his choice—*] It is evident from this and many other places in the Iliad, that hospitality was hereditary, and happiness and honour peculiar to those heroic ages. And surely nothing can set the character of Ulysses in a more agreeable point of light than what Telemachus here delivers of it: 'He was the friend of all mankind.' Eustathius observes, that *φιλοτοπος* has a middle signification; that it implies that Ulysses behaved benevolently to all men, or that all men behaved benevolently to Ulysses; either sense makes Ulysses a very amiable person: he must be a friend to all men to whom all men are friends.

V. 234. *I steer my voyage to the Brutian strand*] In the country of the Brutians, in the lower part of Italy, was a town called Temese. That Homer here meant this city, and not one of the same name in Cyprus, appears not only because this was famous for works of brass, but because (as Strabo observes) Ithaca lay in the direct way from Taphos to this city of the Brutii; whereas it was considerably out of the way to pass by Ithaca to that of Cyprus. The same author says, that the rooms for preparing of brass were remaining in his time, though then out of use. Ovid. Met. xv.

'Hippotadæque domos regis, Temesesque metalla.'

And Statius, Sylv.

'..... se totis Temese dedit hausta metallis.'

Bochart is of opinion, that the name of Temese was given to this

town by the Phœnicians, from the brass it produced; Temes in their language signifying fusion of metals: an art to which the Phœnicians much applied themselves. EUSTATHIUS. DACIER.

V. 245. *Laertes's retirement.*] This most beautiful passage of Laertes has not escaped the censure of the critics: they say he acts an unmanly part, he forgets that he is a king, and reduces himself unworthily into the condition of a servant. Eustathius gives two reasons for his retirement, which answer those objections: the first is, that he could not endure to see the outrage and insolence of the suitors; the second, that his grief for Ulysses makes him abandon society, and prefer his vineyard to his court. This is undoubtedly the picture of human nature under affliction; for sorrow loves solitude. Thus it is, as Dacier well observes, that Menedemus in Terence laments his lost son: Menedemus is the picture of Laertes. Nor does it make any difference, that the one is a king, the other a person of private station: kings are but ennobled humanity, and are liable, as other men, to as great, if not greater sensibility.

The word *επιρυζομενα* (creeping about his vineyard) has also given offence, as it carries an idea of meanness with it; but Eustathius observes, that it excellently expresses the melancholy of Laertes, and denotes no meanness of spirit: the same word is applied to the great Achilles in the Iliad, when he laments at the obsequies of Patroclus; and Horace, no doubt, had it in his view,

‘ Tacitum sylvas inter-reptare salubres.’

V. 257. *Among a savage race, &c.*] It is the observation of Eustathius, that what Minerva here delivers bears resemblance to the oracles, in which part is false, and part true: that Ulysses is detained in an island, is a truth; that he is detained by barbarians, a falsehood: this is done by the goddess, that she may be thought to be really a man, as she appears to be; she speaks with the dubiousness of a man, not the certainty of a goddess; she raises his expectation by shewing she has an insight into futurity; and to engage his belief she discovers in part the truth to Telemachus. Neither was it necessary or convenient for Telemachus to know the whole truth: for if he had known that

Ulysses inhabited a desert, detained by a goddess, he must of consequence have known of his return (for he that could certify the one, could certify the other), and so had never gone in search of him; and it would hence have happened, that Homer had been deprived of giving us those graces of poetry which arise from the voyage of Telemachus. EUSTATHIUS.

V. 275. *To prove a genuine birth, &c.]* There is an appearance of something very shocking in this speech of Telemachus. It literally runs thus: 'My mother assures me that I am the son of Ulysses, but I know it not.' It seems to reflect upon his mother's chastity, as if he had a doubt of his own legitimacy. This seeming simplicity in Telemachus, says Eustathius, is the effect of a troubled spirit; it is grief that makes him doubt if he can be the son of the great, the generous Ulysses; it is no reflection upon Penelope, and consequently no fault in Telemachus: it is an undoubted truth that the mother only knows the legitimacy of the child: thus Euripides,

Ἡ μὲν, γὰρ αὐτῆς οἶδεν οὐλὰ, οὐδ' οἶσται.

that is, the mother knows the child, the father only believes it.

Thus also Menander,

Αὐτὸν γὰρ ἡδεῖς οἶδε, τῇ ποτ' ἐγενέτο

Ἀλλ' ὑπονοῦμεν πάντες, ἢ πιστεύομεν.

that is, No man knows assuredly who begot him, we only guess it, and believe it.

Aristotle in his rhetoric is also of this opinion:

Ἀρίστα περὶ τῶν τέκνων κρίνουσιν αἱ γυναῖκες.

What I have here said is literally translated from Eustathius, and if it edifies the reader I am content. But the meaning of the passage is this, Mentès asks Telemachus if he be the son of Ulysses; he replies, 'So my mother assures me, but nothing sure so wretched as I am could proceed from that great man.'

But however this may be reconciled to truth, I believe few ladies would take it as a compliment, if their sons should tell them there was room to doubt of their legitimacy; there may be abundance of truth in it, and yet very little decency.

V. 309. *Now snatch'd by harpies, &c.*] The meaning of this expression is, that Ulysses has not had the rites of sepulture. This among the ancients was esteemed the greatest of calamities, as it hindered the shades of the deceased from entering into the state of the happy.

V. 315. *To tempt the spouseless queen——resort the nobles.*] It is necessary to reconcile the conduct of the suitors to probability, since it has so great a share in the process of the Odyssey. It may seem incredible that Penelope, who is a queen, in whom the supreme power is lodged, should not dismiss such unwelcome intruders, especially since many of them were her own subjects: besides, it seems an extraordinary way of courtship in them, to ruin the person to whom they make their addresses.

To solve this objection we must consider the nature of the Grecian governments: the chief men of the land had great authority: though the government was monarchical, it was not despotic: Laertes was retired, and disabled with age; Telemachus was yet in his minority; and the fear of any violence either against her own person, or against her son, might deter Penelope from using any endeavours to remove men of such insolence, and such power. Dacier.

V. 341. *To taint with deadly drugs the barbed dart.*] It is necessary to explain this passage. It seems at first view as if Ulysses had requested what a good man could not grant. Ilus, says Mentès, denied the poison, because he feared the anger of the gods; and the poison itself is called by Homer *Ανδροφονον*, as if it were designed against mankind. Eustathius defends Ulysses variously: he intended, says he, to employ it against beasts only, that infested his country, or in hunting. He assigns another reason, and says that the poet is preparing the way to give an air of probability to the destruction of the suitors. He poisons his arrows, that every wound may be mortal; on this account the poison may be called *ανδροφονον*; for it is certain in the wars of Troy poisoned arrows were not in use, for many persons who were wounded recovered; so that of necessity they must be reserved for domestic occasions. From what has been said we may collect the reason why Anchialus granted the poison to Ulysses,

and Ilus denied it; Anchialus was the friend of Ulysses, and knew that he would not employ it to any ill purpose: but Ilus, who was a stranger to him, was afraid lest he should abuse it. EUSTATHIUS.

V. 360. *Dismiss'd with honour, let her hence repair.*] I will lay before the reader literally what Eustathius observes upon these words. There is a solecism, says he, in these verses or words, that cannot be reduced to the rules of construction. It should be *μητρης*, not *μητέρα αψ' ιτω*. How then comes the accusative case to be used instead of the nominative? Mentès, adds he, may be supposed to have intended to have said *αποπεμψον* (send thy mother away); but considering in the midst of the sentence, that such advice was not suitable to be given to Telemachus, he checks himself and suppresses *αποπεμψον*; and no other word immediately occurring, that required an accusative case, he falls into a solecism.

But perhaps this is more ingenious than true; though Mentès was in haste when he spoke it, Homer was not when he composed it. Might not an error creep into the original by the negligence of a transcriber, who might write *μητέρα* for *μητηρ*? This is the more probable, because the one stands in the verse in every respect as well as the other.

What Eustathius adds is very absurd: he says that Telemachus must observe both the interpretations, either send thy mother away, or let thy mother retire. So that the advice was double; send thy mother away if thou dost not love her; but if thou art unwilling to grieve her, let her recess be voluntary.

V. 367. *Omen'd voice — of Jove.*] There is a difficulty in this passage. In any case of inquiry, any words that were heard by accident were called by the Latins, omens; by Homer, the voice of Jupiter; and he styles them so, because it is through his providence that those words come to our knowledge: *κλεος* signifies fame or rumour; and the ancients referred all voices or sounds to Jupiter, and styled him *Zeus παντομφορος*. So that the voice of Jove implies any words that we hear by chance, from whence we can draw any thing that gives light to our concerns or inquiries. DACIER. EUSTATHIUS.

V. 387. *Hast thou not heard, &c.*] It may seem that this example of Orestes does not come fully up to the purpose intended: there is a wide difference in the circumstances: Orestes slew an adulterer, and a single person, with an adulteress. The designs of Telemachus are not against one, but many enemies; neither are they adulterers, nor have they slain the father of Telemachus, as is the case of Orestes: nor is Penelope an adulteress. The intent therefore of the goddess is only to shew what a glorious act it is to defend our parents: Orestes, says Mentès, is every where celebrated for honouring his father, and thou shalt obtain equal honour by defending thy mother.

The sense that *πατροφόνος* here bears is remarkable; it signifies not only a person who kills his own father, but who kills the father of any other person. EUSTATHIUS.

V. 413. . . . *With eagle-speed she cut the sky;
Instant invisible*]

I pass over the several interpretations that have been given to the word *αεττα*; some say it implies she flew up the chimney, &c. In reality it signifies a species of an eagle: but it may also signify the same as *αφανής* (invisible); either of the latter senses are natural, or both together, 'like an eagle she disappeared.' EUSTATHIUS.

V. 420. *Hush'd in attention to the warbled song.*] There may be two reasons why this is inserted; either the suitors were pleased with the sweetness of the song, or the subject of it; they sat attentive to hear the death of Ulysses, in the process of his story. This gives us a reason why immediately Penelope descended to stop the song; she feared lest he might touch upon the story of Ulysses, and say that he died in his return. This would have reduced her to the utmost necessity, and she could not have deferred to marry. Phemius would have certainly found credit, for poets were believed to be inspired by the gods; they were looked upon as prophets, and to have something of divinity in them, as appears from Demodocus in the eighth book of the Odyssey. Besides there was a further necessity to put a stop to the song. If Phemius had declared him to be dead,

Penelope could not have avoided marriage; if alive, the suitors might have desisted, or armed themselves against Ulysses, and then their deaths, one of the principal incidents of the poem, could not have followed; neither could Telemachus have gone in search of his father, if he had foreknown his death, or sudden return. It is therefore artful in the poet to cut the song short; he reserves the story of Ulysses for future narration; and brings all this about by a very probable method, by the interposition of Penelope, who requests that some other story may be chosen, a story that she can hear without sorrow. *

It is very customary for women to be present at the entertainments of men; as appears from the conduct of Helen, Arete, Nausicaa, and Penelope, in divers parts of the *Odyssey*: she is here introduced with the greatest decency; she enters not the room, but stands with tears at the threshold; and even at that distance appears with her face shaded by a veil. EUSTATHIUS.

V. 443. *Oft, Jove's ethereal rays, &c.*] Telemachus here reproves his mother for commanding Phemius to desist, or not to make Ulysses the subject of his song: by saying, that it was not in the poet's own power to choose his subject, which was frequently dictated and inspired by the gods. This is a particular instance of the opinion the ancients held as to the immediate inspiration of their poets. The words in the original evidently bear this sense: 'If the subject displease you, it is not the poet, but Jupiter is to blame, who inspires men of invention, as he himself pleases.' And Madam Dacier strangely mistakes this passage, in rendering it, 'it is not the poet, but Jupiter, who is the cause of our misfortunes, for it is he who dispenses to wretched mortals good or evil as he pleases.' At the same time she acknowledges the word *αλφισται*, which she here renders, laborious, or wretched, to signify persons of wit, in the beginning of lib. vi. and persons of skill and ability in their art, in lib. xiii.

V. 455. *Your widow'd hours, apart, with female toil, &c.*] These verses are taken literally from the sixth book of the *Iliad*, except that *μυθος* is inserted instead of *πολεμος*; Eustathius explains the passage thus: 'Women are not forbid entirely to speak, for women are talking animals, *λαλητον ζων*, they have the faculty of

talking, and indeed are rational creatures; but they must not give too much liberty to that unruly member in the company of men.' Sophocles advises well,

Εὔναι, γυναιξὶ κόσμον ἢ σιῆ φέρει.

'O woman, silence is the ornament of thy sex.' Madam Dacier, though she plunders almost every thing, has spared this observation.

V. 540. *The sage Euryclea.*] Euryclea was a very aged person; she was bought by Laertes to nurse Ulysses; and in her old age attends Telemachus: she cost Laertes twenty oxen; that is, a certain quantity of money (ὕλης μέγαλλικης) which would buy twenty oxen: or perhaps the form of an ox was stamped upon the metal, and from thence had its appellation.

The simplicity of these heroic times is remarkable; an old woman is the only attendant upon the son of a king: she lights him to his apartment, takes care of his clothes, and hangs them up at the side of his bed. Greatness then consisted not in shew, but in the mind: this conduct proceeded not from the meanness of poverty, but from the simplicity of manners. EUSTATHIUS.

Having now gone through the first book, I shall only observe to the reader, that the whole of it does not take up the compass of an entire day: when Minerva appears to Telemachus, the suitors were preparing to sit down to the banquet at noon; and the business of the first book concludes with the day. It is true, that the gods hold a debate before the descent of Minerva, and some small time must be allowed for that transaction. It is remarkable, that there is not one simile in this book, except we allow those three words to be one, ὅρως δ' ὥς ἀνοπᾶτα; the same observation is true of the first book of the Iliad.

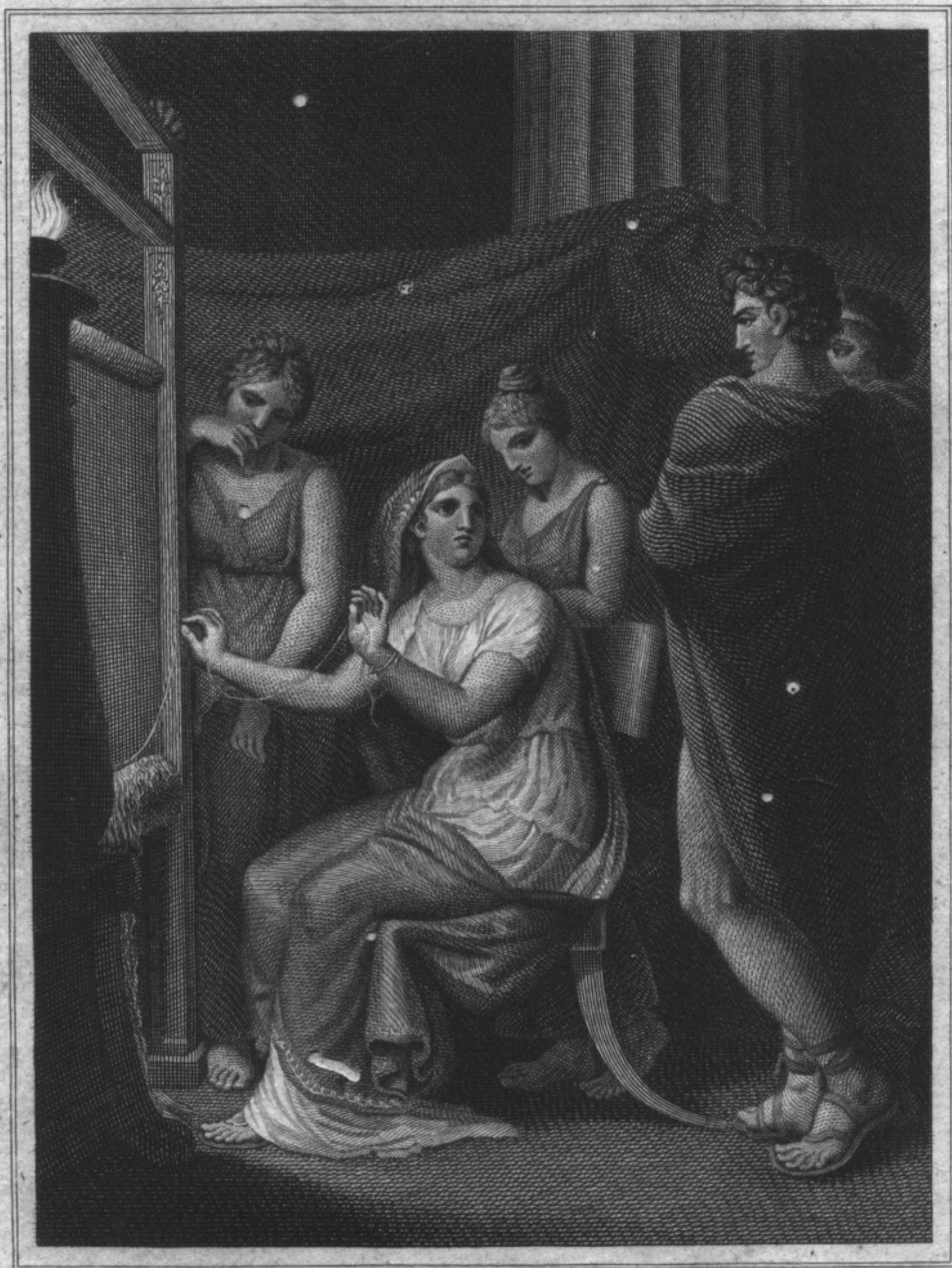
THE
SECOND BOOK
OF THE
ODYSSEY.

THE ARGUMENT.

THE COUNCIL OF ITHACA.

TELEMACHUS, in the assembly of the lords of Ithaca, complains of the injustice done him by the suitors, and insists upon their departure from his palace; appealing to the princes, and exciting the people to declare against them. The suitors endeavour to justify their stay, at least till he shall send the queen to the court of Icarius her father; which he refuses. There appears a prodigy of two eagles in the sky, which an augur expounds to the ruin of the suitors. Telemachus then demands a vessel to carry him to Pylos and Sparta, there to inquire of his father's fortunes. Pallas in the shape of Mentor (an ancient friend of Ulysses) helps him to a ship, assists him in preparing necessaries for the voyage, and embarks with him that night; which concludes the second day from the opening of the poem.

The scene continues in the palace of Ulysses in Ithaca.



Painted by H^r Howard A.

Engraved by Jas. Stow

BOOK II.

Now red'ning from the dawn, the morning ray
Glow'd in the front of heav'n, and gave the day.
The youthful hero, with returning light,
Rose anxious from th' inquietudes of night.
A royal robe he wore with graceful pride, 5
A two-edg'd falchion threaten'd by his side,
Embroider'd sandals glitter'd as he trod,
And forth he mov'd, majestic as a god.
Then by his heralds, restless of delay,
To council calls the peers: the peers obey. 10
Soon as in solemn form th' assembly sat,
From his high dome himself descends in state.
Bright in his hand a pond'rous jav'lin shin'd;
Two dogs, a faithful guard, attend behind;
Pallas with grace divine his form improves, 15
And gazing crowds admire him as he moves.

His father's throne he fill'd: while distant stood
The hoary peers; and aged wisdom bow'd.

'Twas silence all, at last Ægyptius spoke;
Ægyptius, by his age and sorrows broke: 20

A length of days his soul with prudence crown'd,
 A length of days had bent him to the ground.
 His eldest hope in arms to Ilion came,
 By great Ulysses taught the path to fame;
 But (hapless youth!) the hideous Cyclops tore 25
 His quiv'ring limbs, and quaff'd his spouting gore.
 Three sons remain'd: to climb with haughty fires
 The royal bed, Eurynomus aspires;
 The rest with duteous love his griefs assuage,
 And ease the sire of half the cares of age. 30
 Yet still his Antiphus he loves, he mourns,
 And as he stood, he spoke and wept by turns:
 Since great Ulysses sought the Phrygian plains,
 Within these walls inglorious silence reigns.
 Say then, ye peers! by whose commands we meet?
 Why here once more in solemn council sit? 36
 Ye young, ye old, the weighty cause disclose:
 Arrives some message of invading foes?
 Or say, does high necessity of state
 Inspire some patriot, and demand debate? 40
 The present synod speaks its author wise;
 Assist him, Jove, thou regent of the skies!
 He spoke. Telemachus with transport glows,
 Embrac'd the omen, and majestic rose;

(His royal hand th' imperial sceptre sway'd) 45
 Then thus, addressing to Ægyptius, said:

Rev'rend old man! lo here confest he stands
 By whom ye meet; my grief your care demands.
 No story I unfold, of public woes,
 Nor bear advices of impending foes: 50
 Peace the blest land, and joys incessant crown;
 Of all this happy realm, I grieve alone.
 For my lost sire continual sorrows spring,
 The great, the good; your father, and your king!
 Yet more; our house from its foundation bows,
 Our foes are pow'rful, and your sons the foes: 56
 Hither, unwelcome to the queen they come;
 Why seek they not the rich Icarian dome?
 If she must wed, from other hands require
 The dow'ry: is Telemachus her sire? 60
 Yet through my court the noise of revel rings,
 And wastes the wise frugality of kings.
 Scarce all my herds their luxury suffice;
 Scarce all my wine their midnight ~~h~~af's supplies.
 Safe in my youth, in riot still they grow, 65
 Nor in the helpless orphan dread a foe.
 But come it will, the time when manhood grants
 More pow'rful advocates than vain complaints.

Approach that hour! unsufferable wrong
 Cries to the gods, and vengeance sleeps too long.
 Rise then, ye peers! with virtuous anger rise; 71
 Your fame revere, but most th' avenging skies.
 By all the deathless pow'rs that reign above,
 By righteous Themis and by thund'ring Jove,
 (Themis, who gives to councils, or denies 75
 Success; and humbles, or confirms the wise)
 Rise in my aid! suffice the tears that flow
 For my lost sire, nor add new woe to woe.
 If e'er he bore the sword to strengthen ill,
 Or having pow'r to wrong, betray'd the will, 80
 On me, on me your kindled wrath assuage,
 And bid the voice of lawless riot rage.
 If ruin to our royal race ye doom,
 Be you the spoilers, and our wealth consume.
 Then might we hope redress from juster laws, 85
 And raise all Ithaca to aid our cause:
 But while your sons commit th' unpunish'd wrong,
 You make ~~the~~ arm of violence too strong.

While thus he spoke, with rage and grief he
 frown'd,

And dash'd th' imperial sceptre to the ground. 90
 The big round tear hung trembling in his eye:
 The synod griev'd, and gave a pitying sigh,

Then silent sat—at length Antinous burns
With haughty rage, and sternly thus returns:

O insolence of youth! whose tongue affords
Such railing eloquence, and war of words. 96

Studious thy country's worthies to defame,
Thy erring voice displays thy mother's shame.

Elusive of the bridal day, she gives

Fond hopes to all, and all with hopes deceives.

Did not the sun, thro' heav'n's wide azure roll'd,

For three long years the royal fraud behold?

While she, laborious in delusion spread

The spacious loom, and mix'd the various thread;

Where as to life the wond'rous figures rise, 105

Thus spoke th' inventive queen, with artful sighs:

'Tho' cold in death Ulysses breathes no more,

Cease yet a while to urge the bridal hour;

Cease, till to great Laërtes I bequeath

A task of grief, his ornaments of death: 110

Lest when the fates his royal ashes claim,

The Grecian matrons taint my spotless fame;

When he, whom living mighty realms obey'd,

Shall want in death a shroud to grace his shade.'

Thus she: at once the gen'rous train complies,

Nor fraud mistrusts in virtue's fair disguise. 116

The work she ply'd; but studious of delay,
 By night revers'd the labours of the day.
 While thrice the sun his annual journey made,
 The conscious lamp the midnight fraud survey'd;
 Unheard, unseen, three years her arts prevail; 121
 The fourth, her maid unfolds th' amazing tale.
 We saw, as unperceiv'd we took our stand,
 The backward labours of her faithless hand.
 Then urg'd, she perfects her illustrious toils; 125
 A wond'rous monument of female wiles!

But you, O peers! and thou, O prince! give ear:
 (I speak aloud, that ev'ry Greek may hear)
 Dismiss the queen; and if her sire approves,
 Let him espouse her to the peer she loves: 130
 Bid instant to prepare the bridal train,
 Nor let a race of princes wait in vain.
 Though with a grace divine her soul is blest,
 And all Minerva breathes within her breast, 134
 In wond'rous arts than woman more renown'd,
 And more than woman with deep wisdom crown'd;
 Though Tyro nor Mecene match her name,
 Nor great Alcmena (the proud boasts of fame),
 Yet thus by heav'n adorn'd, by heav'n's decree
 She shines with fatal excellence, to thee: 140

With thee, the bowl we drain, indulge the feast,
 Till righteous heav'n reclaim her stubborn breast.
 What though from pole to pole resounds her name!
 The son's destruction waits the mother's fame:
 For till she leaves thy court, it is decreed, 145
 Thy bowl to empty, and thy flock to bleed.

While yet he speaks, Telemachus replies:
 E'en nature starts, and what ye ask denies.
 Thus, shall I thus repay a mother's cares,
 Who gave me life, and nurs'd my infant years?
 While sad on foreign shores Ulysses treads, 151
 Or glides a ghost with unapparent shades;
 How to Icarius in the bridal hour
 Shall I, by waste undone, refund the dow'r?
 How from my father should I vengeance dread?
 How would my mother curse my hated head? 156
 And while in wrath to vengeful fiends she cries,
 How from their hell would vengeful fiends arise?
 Abhorr'd by all, accurs'd my name would grow,
 The earth's disgrace, and humankind my foe. 160
 If this displease, why urge ye here your stay?
 Haste from the court, ye spoilers, haste away:
 Waste in wild riot what your land allows,
 There ply the early feast, and late carouse.

But if, to honour lost, 'tis still decreed 165
 For you my bowl shall flow, my flocks shall bleed;
 Judge and assert my right, impartial Jove!
 By him, and all th' immortal host above,
 (A sacred oath) if heav'n the pow'r supply,
 Vengeance I vow, and for your wrongs ye die. 170

With that, two eagles from a mountain's height
 By Jove's command direct their rapid flight;
 Swift they descend, with wing to wing conjoin'd,
 Stretch their broad plumes, and float upon the wind.
 Above th' assembled peers they wheel on high, 175
 And clang their wings, and hov'ring beat the sky;
 With ardent eyes the rival train they threat,
 And shrieking loud, denounce approaching fate.
 They cuff, they tear; their cheeks and neck they
 rend,

And from their plumes huge drops of blood de-
 scend: 180

Then sailing o'er the domes and tow'rs, they fly
 Full tow'rd the east, and mount into the sky.

The wond'ring rivals gaze with cares opprest,
 And chilling horrors freeze in ev'ry breast.
 Till big with knowledge of approaching woes 185
 The prince of augurs, Halitherses, rose:

Prescient he view'd th' aërial tracks, and drew
A sure presage from ev'ry wing that flew.

Ye sons (he cry'd) of Ithaca, give ear,
Hear all! but chiefly you, O rivals! hear. 190
Destruction sure o'er all your heads impends;
Ulysses comes, and death his steps attends.
Nor to the great alone is death decreed;
We, and our guilty Ithaca, must bleed.
Why cease we then the wrath of heav'n to stay?
Be humbled all, and lead, ye great! the way.
For lo! my words no fancied woes relate:
I speak from science, and the voice is fate.

When great Ulysses sought the Phrygian shores
To shake with war proud Ilion's lofty tow'rs, 200
Deeds then undone my faithful tongue foretold:
Heav'n seal'd my words, and you those deeds behold.

I see (I cried) his woes, a countless train;
I see his friends o'erwhelm'd beneath the main;
How twice ten years from shore to shore he roams:
Now twice ten years are past, and now he comes!

To whom Eurymachus: Fly, dotard, fly!
With thy wise dreams, and fables of the sky.
Go, prophesy at home; thy sons advise: 209
Here thou art sage in vain—I better read the skies.

Unnumber'd birds glide through th' aërial way,
 Vagrants of air, and unforeboding stray.
 Cold in the tomb, or in the deeps below,
 Ulysses lies: O wert thou laid as low!
 Then would that busy head no brails suggest, 215
 Nor fire to rage Telemachus's breast.
 From him some bribe thy venal tongue requires,
 And int'rest, not the god, thy voice inspires.
 His guideless youth, if thy experienc'd age
 Mislead fallacious into idle rage, 220
 Vengeance deserv'd thy malice shall repress,
 And but augment the wrongs thou wouldst redress.
 Telemachus may bid the queen repair
 To great Icarius, whose paternal care 224
 Will guide her passion, and reward her choice
 With wealthy dow'r, and bridal gifts of price.
 Till she retires, determin'd we remain,
 And both the prince and augur threat in vain:
 His pride of words, and thy wild dream of fate,
 Move not the brave, or only move their hate. 230
 Threat on, O prince! elude the bridal day,
 Threat on, till all thy stores in waste decay.
 True, Greece affords a train of lovely dames,
 In wealth and beauty worthy of our flames:

But never from this nobler suit we cease; 235
 For wealth and beauty less than virtue please.

To whom the youth: Since then in vain I tell
 My num'rous woes, in silence let them dwell.

But heav'n, and all the Greeks, have heard my
 wrongs:

To heav'n, and all the Greeks, redress belongs.

Yet this I ask (nor be it ask'd in vain), 241

A bark to waft me o'er the rolling main;

The realms of Pyle and Sparta to explore,

And seek my royal sire from shore to shore:

If, or to fame his doubtful fate be known, 245

Or to be learn'd from oracles alone?

If yet he lives, with patience I forbear

Till the fleet hours restore the circling year:

But if already wand'ring in the train

Of empty shades, I measure back the main, 250

Plant the fair column o'er the mighty dead,

And yield his consort to the nuptial bed.

He ceas'd; and while abash'd the peers attend,
 Mentor arose, Ulysses' faithful friend: 254

[When fierce in arms he sought the scenes of war,

'My friend (he cried) my palace be thy care;

Years roll'd on years my godlike sire decay,

Guard thou his age, and his behests obey.']

Stern as he rose, he cast his eyes around, 259

That flash'd with rage; and, as he spoke, he frown'd:

O never, never more let king be just,

Be mild in pow'r, or faithful to his trust!

Let tyrants govern with an iron rod,

Oppress, destroy, and be the scourge of God;

Since he who like a father held his reign, 265

So soon forgot, was just and mild in vain!

True, while my friend is griev'd, his griefs I share;

Yet now the rivals are my smallest care:

They, for the mighty mischiefs they devise, 269

Ere long shall pay—their forfeit lives the price.

But against you, ye Greeks! ye coward train,

Gods! how my soul is mov'd with just disdain?

Dumb ye all stand, and not one tongue affords

His injur'd prince the little aid of words.

While yet he spoke, Leocritus rejoin'd: 275

O pride of words, and arrogance of mind!

Wouldst thou to rise in arms the Greeks advise?

Join all your pow'rs! in arms, ye Greeks, arise!

Yet would your pow'rs in vain our strength oppose;

The valiant few o'ermatch an host of foes. 280

Should great Ulysses stern appear in arms,

While the bowl circles, and the banquet warms;

Tho' to his breast his spouse with transport flies,
 Torn from her breast, that hour, Ulysses dies.
 But hence retreating to your domes repair; 285
 To arm the vessel, Mentor! be thy care,
 And Halitherses! thine: be each his friend;
 Ye lov'd the father: go, the son attend.
 But yet, I trust, the boaster means to stay
 Safe in the court, nor tempt the wat'ry way. 290

Then, with a rushing sound, th' assembly bend,
 Diverse their steps: the rival rout ascend
 The royal dome; whilst sad the prince explores
 The neighb'ring main, and sorrowing treads the
 shores.

There, as the waters o'er his hands he shed, 295
 The royal suppliant to Minerva pray'd:

O goddess! who descending from the skies
 Vouchsaf'd thy presence to my wond'ring eyes;
 By whose commands the raging deeps I trace, 299
 And seek my sire through storms and rolling seas!
 Hear from thy heav'ns above, O warrior-maid!
 Descend once more, propitious to my aid.
 Without thy presence, vain is thy command;
 Greece, and the rival train, thy voice withstand.

Indulgent to his pray'r, the goddess took 305
 Sage Mentor's form, and thus like Mentor spoke:

O prince! in early youth divinely wise,
 Born, the Ulysses of thy age to rise!
 If to the son the father's worth descends, 309
 O'er the wide waves success thy ways attends:
 To tread the walks of death he stood prepar'd,
 And what he greatly thought, he nobly dar'd.
 Were not wise sons descendant of the wise,
 And did not heroes from brave heroes rise; 314
 Vain were my hopes: few sons attain the praise
 Of their great sires, and most their sires disgrace.
 But since thy veins paternal virtue fires,
 And all Penelope thy soul inspires,
 Go, and succeed! the rivals' aims despise;
 For never, never, wicked man was wise. 320
 Blind they rejoice, though now, e'en now they fall;
 Death hastes amain: one hour o'erwhelms them all!
 And lo, with speed we plough the wat'ry way;
 My pow'r shall guard thee, and my hand convey:
 The winged vessel studious I prepare, 325
 Through seas and realms companion of thy care.
 Thou to the court ascend; and to the shores
 (When night advances) bear the naval stores:
 Bread, that decaying man with strength supplies,
 And gen'rous wine, which thoughtful sorrow flies.

Meanwhile the mariners by my command 331
 Shall speed aboard, a valiant chosen band.
 Wide o'er the bay, by vessel vessel rides;
 The best I choose to waft thee o'er the tides.

She spoke: to his high dome the prince returns,
 And as he moves, with royal anguish mourns. 336
 'Twas riot all, among the lawless train;
 Boar bled by boar, and goat by goat lay slain.
 Arriv'd, his hand the gay Antinous prest,
 And thus deriding, with a smile addrest: 340

Grieve not, O daring prince! that noble heart;
 Ill suits gay youth the stern heroic part.
 Indulge the genial hour, unbend thy soul,
 Leave thought to age, and drain the flowing bowl.
 Studios to ease thy grief, our care provides 345
 The bark, to waft thee o'er the swelling tides.

Is this (returns the prince) for mirth a time?
 When lawless gluttons riot, mirth's a crime;
 The luscious wines, dishonour'd, lose their taste;
 The song is noise, and impious is the feast. 350
 Suffice it to have spent with swift decay
 The wealth of kings, and made my youth a prey.
 But now the wise instructions of the sage,
 And manly thoughts inspir'd by manly age,

Teach me to seek redress for all my woe, 355

Here, or in Pyle—in Pyle, or here, your foe.

Deny your vessels, ye deny in vain;

A private voyager I pass the main.

Free breathe the winds, and free the billows flow,

And where on earth I live, I live your foe. 360

Hespoke and frown'd, nor longer deign'd to stay,
Sternly his hand withdrew, and strode away.

Meantime, o'er all the dome, they quaff, they
feast,

Derisive taunts were spread from guest to guest,
And each in jovial mood his mate address. 365

Tremble ye not, O friends! and coward fly,
Doom'd by the stern Telemachus to die?
To Pyle or Sparta to demand supplies,
Big with revenge, the mighty warrior flies:
Or comes from Ephyré with poisons fraught, 370
And kills us all in one tremendous draught!

Or who can say (his gamesome mate replies)
But while the dangers of the deeps he tries,
He, like his sire, may sink depriv'd of breath,
And punish us unkindly by his death? 375

What mighty labours would he then create,
To seize his treasures, and divide his state,

The royal palace to the queen convey,
Or him she blesses in the bridal day!

Meantime the lofty rooms the prince surveys,
Where lay the treasures of th' Ithacian race: 381
Here ruddy brass and gold refulgent blaz'd;
There polish'd chests embroider'd vestures grac'd;
Here jars of oil breath'd forth a rich perfume;
There casks of wine in rows adorn'd the dome. 385
(Pure flav'rous wine, by gods in bounty giv'n,
And worthy to exalt the feasts of heav'n)
Untouch'd they stood, till his long labours o'er
The great Ulysses reach'd his native shore.

A double strength of bars secur'd the gates: 390
Fast by the door the wise Euryclea waits;
Euryclea, who, great Ops! thy lineage shar'd,
And watch'd all night, all day; a faithful guard.

To whom the prince: O thou, whose guardian
care

Nurs'd the most wretched king that breathes the
air; 395

Untouch'd and sacred may these vessels stand,
Till great Ulysses views his native land.

But by thy care twelve urns of wine be fill'd,
Next these in worth, and firm those urns be seal'd;

And twice ten measures of the choicest flour 400
 Prepar'd, ere yet descends the ev'ning hour.
 For when the fav'ring shades of night arise,
 And peaceful slumbers close my mother's eyes,
 Me from our coast shall spreading sails convey,
 To seek Ulysses through the wat'ry way. 405

While yet he spoke, she fill'd the walls with cries,
 And tears ran trickling from her aged eyes.
 Oh whither, whither flies my son? she cried,
 To realms, that rocks and roaring seas divide?
 In foreign lands thy father's days decay'd, 410
 And foreign lands contain the mighty dead.
 The wat'ry way ill-fated if thou try,
 All, all must perish, and by fraud you die!
 Then stay, my child! storms beat, and rolls the main;
 O beat those storms, and roll the seas in vain! 415

Far hence (replied the prince) thy fears be driv'n;
 Heav'n calls me forth; these counsels are of heav'n.
 But by the pow'rs that hate the perjurd, swear,
 To keep my voyage from the royal ear,
 Nor uncompell'd the dang'rous truth betray, 420
 Till twice six times descends the lamp of day:
 Lest the sad tale a mother's life impair,
 And grief destroy what time awhile would spare.

Thus he. The matron with uplifted eyes
 Attests th' all-seeing sov'reign of the skies. 425
 Then studious she prepares the choicest flour,
 The strength of wheat, and wines an ample store.
 While to the rival train the prince returns,
 The martial goddess with impatience burns ;
 Like thee, Telemachus, in voice and size, 430
 With speed divine from street to street she flies,
 She bids the mariners prepar'd, to stand,
 When night descends, embodied on the strand.
 Then to Noemon swift she runs, she flies,
 And asks a bark: the chief a bark supplies. 435

And now, declining with his sloping wheels,
 Down sunk the sun behind the western hills.
 The goddess shov'd the vessel from the shores,
 And stow'd within its womb the naval stores.
 Full in the op'nings of the spacious main 440
 It rides; and now descends the sâilor-train.

Next, to the court, impatient of delay,
 With rapid step the goddess urg'd her way:
 There ev'ry eye with slumb'rous chains she bound,
 And dash'd the flowing goblet to the ground. 445
 Drowsy they rose, with heavy fumes opprest,
 Reel'd from the palace, and retir'd to rest.

Then thus, in Mentor's rev'rend form array'd,
Spoke to Telemachus the martial maid:

Lo! on the seas, prepar'd the vessel stands, 450

Th' impatient mariner thy speed demands.

Swift as she spoke, with rapid pace she leads;

The footsteps of the deity he treads.

Swift to the shore they move: along the strand

The ready vessel rides, the sailors ready stand. 455

He bids them bring their stores; th' attending
train

Load the tall bark, and launch into the main.

The prince and goddess to the stern ascend;

To the strong stroke at once the rowers bend.

Full from the west she bids fresh breezes blow;

The sable billows foam and roar below. 461

The chief his orders gives: th' obedient band

With due observance wait the chief's command;

With speed the mast they rear, with speed unbind

The spacious sheet, and stretch it to the wind. 465

High o'er the roaring waves the spreading sails

Bow the tall mast, and swell before the gales;

The crooked keel the parting surge divides,

And to the stern retreating roll the tides.

And now they ship their oars, and crown with wine

The holy goblet to the pow'rs divine: 471

Imploring all the gods that reign above,
But chief the blue-ey'd progeny of Jove.

Thus all the night they stem the liquid way,
And end their voyage with the morning ray. 475

SELECT NOTES

TO

BOOK II.

THIS book opens with the first appearance of Telemachus upon the stage of action. And Bossu observes the great judgment of the poet, in beginning with the transactions of Ithaca in the absence of Ulysses: by this method he sets the conduct of Telemachus, Penelope, and the suitors, in a strong point of light; they all have a large share in the story of the poem, and consequently ought to have distinguishing characters. It is as necessary in epic poetry, as it is on the theatre, to let us immediately into the character of every person whom the poet introduces: this adds perspicuity to the story, and we immediately grow acquainted with each personage, and interest ourselves in the good or ill fortune that attends them through the whole relation.

Telemachus is now about twenty years of age: in the eleventh book the poet tells us, he was an infant in the arms of his mother when Ulysses sailed to Troy; that hero was absent near twenty years, and from hence we may gather the exact age of Telemachus. He is every where described as a person of piety to the gods, of duty to his parents, and as a lover of his country: he is prudent, temperate, and valiant: and the poet well sets off the importance of this young hero, by giving him the goddess of war and wisdom for his constant attendant.

V. 13. . . . *In his hand a pond'rous jav'lin shin'd.*] The poet describes Telemachus as if he were marching against an enemy, or going to a council of war, rather than to an assembly of peers in his own country: two reasons are assigned for this conduct; either this was the common usage of princes in those times, or Telemachus might look upon the suitors as enemies, and consequently go to council in arms as against enemies. EUSTATHIUS.

V. 14. *Two dogs, a faithful guard, attend behind.*] This passage has not escaped the raillery of the critics; they look upon it

as a mean description of a hero and a prince, to give him a brace of dogs only for his guards or attendants: but such was the simplicity of ancient princes, that except in war they had rarely any attendants or equipage. And we may be confident Homer copies after the custom of the time, unless we can be so absurd as to suppose he would feign low circumstances unnecessarily, through a want of judgment.

Virgil judged otherwise, and thought this circumstance worthy of his imitation:

‘Quin etiam gemini custodes limine ab alto
Procedunt, gressumque canes comitantur Herilem.’

Patroclus is described in the Iliad with the same attendants:

‘. . . . nine large dogs domestic at his board.’ B. xxiii.

Poetry, observes Dacier, is like painting, which draws the greatest beauties from the simplest customs: and even in history, we receive a sensible pleasure from the least circumstance that denotes the customs of ancient times. It may be added, that the poet, as well as the painter, is obliged to follow the customs of the age of which he writes, or paints: a modern dress would ill become Achilles or Ulysses; such a conduct would be condemned as an absurdity in painting, and ought to be so in poetry.

V. 31. *Yet still his Antiphus he loves, he mourns.*] Homer, says Eustathius, inserts these particularities concerning the family of Ægyptius, to give an air of truth to his story: it does not appear that Ægyptius knew the certainty of the death of Antiphus (for it is the poet who relates it, and not the father); whence, as Dacier observes, should he learn it? He only laments him, according to the prevailing opinion that all the companions of Ulysses were lost with Ulysses.

V. 33. *Since great Ulysses, &c.*] We here are told, that there never had been any council convened in Ithaca since the departure of Ulysses. The general design and moral of the Odyssey is to inform us of the mischievous effects which the absence of a king and father of a family produces: we deprive, as Bossu observes, the poem of its very soul, and spoil the fable, if we

retrench from it the disorders which the suitors create in the absence of Ulysses, both in his family and dominions. Nothing can give us a greater image of those disorders, than what is here related: what must a kingdom suffer in twenty years without a ruler, without a council to make laws or punish enormities? Such is the condition of Ithaca; Laertes is superannuated; Penelope oppressed by the violence of the suitors; and Telemachus to this time, in his minority.

It is very artful in the poet to open the assembly by Ægyptius: Telemachus was^d the person who convened it: and being the greatest personage present, it might be expected that he should open the design of it: but to give Telemachus courage, who was young and inexperienced, Ægyptius first rises, and by praising the person who had summoned them (of whom he seems ignorant) gives Telemachus to understand he has friends among the assembly: this he could no other way so safely have done, considering the power of the suitors. By this means Telemachus is encouraged to speak boldly, and arraign the disorders of the suitors with the utmost freedom.

V. 54. *Your father, and your king.*] Telemachus here sets the character of Ulysses, as a king, in the most agreeable point of light: he ruled his people with the same mildness as a father rules his children. This must needs have a very happy effect upon the audience; not only as it shews Ulysses to have been a good governor; but as it recalls the memory of the happiness they received from that mild government, and obliquely condemns them of ingratitude who had forgot it. By this method also the poet interests us deeply in the sufferings of Ulysses; we cannot see a good man and good king in distress, without the most tender emotions.

V. 55. *Yet more; our house, &c.*] What Telemachus here says, has given offence to the critics; they think it indecent for a son to say, that he bears with more regret the disorder of his family than the loss of his father; yet this objection will vanish, if we weigh Penelope, Telemachus, and his whole posterity, against the single person of Ulysses.

But what chiefly takes away this objection is, that Telema-

chus was still in hopes of his father's return: for *απύλεια* does not imply necessarily his death, but absence: and then both with justice and decency, Telemachus may say that he grieves more for the destruction of his family, than for the absence of Ulysses.

V. 63. *Scarce all my herds their luxury suffice.*] This passage is ridiculed by the critics: they set it in a wrong light, and then grow very pleasant upon it: Telemachus makes a sad outcry because the suitors eat his sheep, his beeves and fatted goats; and at last falls into tears. The truth is, the riches of kings and princes, in those early ages, consisted chiefly in flocks and cattle; thus Æneas and Paris are described as tending their flocks, &c. and Abraham, in the Scriptures, as abounding in this kind of wealth.

These critics would form a different idea of the state and condition of Telemachus, if they considered that he had been capable to maintain no fewer, than a hundred and eight persons in a manner very expensive for many years; for so many (with their attendants) were the suitors, as appears from the sixteenth book: and at the same time he kept up the dignity of his own court, and lived with great hospitality.

But it is a sufficient answer to the objections against this passage, to observe, that it is not the expence, but manner of it, that Telemachus laments: this he expressly declares by the word *μαψιδίω*; and surely a sober man may complain against luxury, without being arraigned of meanness; and against profusion, without being condemned for parsimony.

V. 75. *Themis, who gives to councils, or denies
Success;]*

Eustathius observes, that there was a custom to carry the statue of Themis to the assemblies in former ages, and carry it back again when those assemblies were dissolved; and thus Themis may be said to form, and dissolve an assembly. Dacier dislikes this assertion, as having no foundation in antiquity; she thinks that the assertion of Telemachus is general, that he intimates, it is justice alone that establishes the councils of mankind, and that

injustice confounds and brings the wicked designs of men to confusion.

I have followed this interpretation, not only as it suits best with the usual morality of Homer, but also as Jupiter is mentioned with Themis; and no such custom is pretended concerning his statue. He is expressly styled by the ancients *Zeus agoraios*. In Sicily there was an altar of *Zeus agoraios*, or of 'Jupiter who presides over councils.' EUSTATHIUS from HERODOTUS.

V. 84. *Be you the spoilers, and our wealth consume.*] To understand this passage, we must remember, as Eustathius remarks, that Telemachus is pleading his cause before the Ithacensians; then he constitutes the judges of his cause: he therefore prevents an answer which they might make, viz. 'We are not the men that are guilty of these outrages;' Telemachus rejoins, 'It were better for me to suffer from your hands; for by your quiescence you make my affairs desperate;' an intimation that they should rise in his defence.

V. 91. *The big round tear hung trembling in his eye.*] This passage is not one of those where the poet can be blamed for causing a hero to weep. If we consider the youth of Telemachus, together with the tenderness agreeable to that time of life; the subjects that demand his concern; the apprehension of the loss of a father; and the desolate state of his mother and kingdom: all these make his readiness to burst into tears an argument, not of any want of spirit in him, but of true sense, and goodness of nature; and is a great propriety, which shews the right judgment of the poet.

V. 95. *O insolence of youth! &c.*] We find Antinous always setting himself in the strongest opposition to Telemachus; and therefore he is the first that falls by the spear of Ulysses; the poet observes justice, and as Antinous is the first in guilt, he is the first in punishment. What Antinous says in this speech, concerning the treachery of the female servant of Penelope, prepares the way for the punishment Ulysses inflicts on some of the maids in the conclusion of the poem: this is an act of poetical justice; and it is as necessary in epic as in tragic poetry, to reward the just, and punish the guilty. EUSTATHIUS.

V. 99. *Elusive of the bridal day, she gives
Fond hopes to all, and all with hopes deceives.]*

It will be necessary to vindicate the character of Penelope, the heroine of the poem, from the aspersion of Antinous. It must be confessed that she has a very hard game to play, she neither dares consent, nor deny; if she consents, she injures Ulysses, whom she still expects to return; if she deny, she endangers the throne, and the life of Telemachus, from the violence of the suitors; so that no other method is left to elude their addresses.

I must not conceal what Eustathius has mentioned from some authors, as Lycophron, &c. who says that Penelope was *κατασφιδά*, in plain English, an harlot: and he quotes Herodotus, as affirming that she had a son, named Pan, by Hermes; but the bishop declares it is all a scandal; and every body must conclude the same, from her conduct, as described in Homer.

To vindicate her in this place, we must consider who it is that speaks; Antinous, an unsuccessful lover: and what he blames as a crime, is really her glory; he blames her because she does not comply with their desires; and it had been an act of guilt to have complied. He himself sufficiently vindicates her in the conclusion of his speech, where he extols her above all the race of womankind: so that the seeming inconsistency of Penelope must be imputed to the necessity of her affairs: she is artful, but not criminal.

The original says, she deceived the suitors by her messages; a plain intimation, that she used no extraordinary familiarities with her admirers, and through the whole course of the poem she seldom appears in their assemblies.

V. 109. *Cease, till to great Laertes I bequeath
A task of grief, his ornaments of death.]*

It was an ancient custom to dedicate the finest pieces of weaving and embroidery, to honour the funerals of the dead: and these were usually wrought by the nearest relations in their life-time. Thus in the twenty-second Iliad, Andromache laments that the

body of Hector must be exposed to the air, without those ornaments.

... ἅταρ τοὶ ἑματ' ἐνὶ μεγάροισι κεύθαι,
 Ἀσπία τε καὶ χαριεῖα, τέλειμεια χερσὶ γυναικῶν.

Ω

And the mother of Euryalus in Virgil, to her son :

' Nec te tua funera mater
 Produxi, pressive oculos, aut vulnera lavi,
 Veste tegens, tibi quam noctes festina diesque
 Urgebam, et tēta curas solabar aniles.'

V. 140. *She shines with fatal excellence to thee.*] Eustathius observes, that Antinous, in the opening of his speech, throws the fault upon Penelope, to engage the favour of the multitude : but being conscious that he had said things which Penelope would resent, he extols her in the conclusion of it. He ascribes an obstinacy of virtue to her, and by this double conduct endeavours to make both Penelope and the multitude his friends.

V. 147. *Telemachus's reply.*] Telemachus every where speaks with an openness and bravery of spirit ; this speech is a testimony of it, as well as his former ; he answers chiefly to the dismissal of Penelope, says it would be an offence against heaven and earth ; and concludes with a vehemence of expression, and tells Antinous that such a word, *μυθεῖν*, shall never fall from his tongue.

The critics have found fault with one part of the speech, as betraying a spirit of avarice and meanness in Telemachus :

' How to Icarius, in the bridal hour,
 Shall I, by waste undone, refund the dow'r?'

They think it unworthy of Telemachus to make the dower of Penelope an argument against her dismissal, and consequently ascribe his detention of her, not to duty, but to covetousness. To take away this objection, they point the verses in a different manner, and place a stop after *ἀποτίμω*, and then the sense runs thus: ' I cannot consent to dismiss her who bore me, and nursed me in my infancy, while her husband is absent, or perhaps dead ;

besides, hard would be the punishment I should suffer, if I should voluntarily send away Penelope to Icarius.'

Dacier dislikes this solution, and appeals to the customs of those ages, to justify her opinion: if a son forced away his mother from his house, he was obliged to restore her dower, and all she brought in marriage to her husband: but if she retired voluntarily to engage in a second marriage, the dower remained with the son as lawful heir. This opinion of Dacier may be confirmed from Demosthenes in his orations, *καὶ μέγα ταῦτα, ἀνδρὸς αὐτῆς τελευτήσαντος, ἀπολιπύσα τον οἶκον, καὶ κομισαμένη τὴν προίκα.* 'Afterwards upon the decease of her husband, leaving his family, and receiving back her portion, &c.' The same author adds, that the reason why the suitors are so urgent to send away Penelope, is, that she may choose to marry some one of them, rather than return to Icarius; so that Telemachus only takes hold of the argument for her dismissal, in order to detain her. 'They addressed Penelope more for the sake of her riches than her beauty (for she must be about forty years old), and he tells them, that if he sends her away against her consent, he must restore those riches, which they covet more than the person of Penelope. This I confess is very refined: and perhaps it may be sufficient to take off the objection of covetousness in Telemachus, to understand no more than what the words at the first view seem to imply, viz. an abhorrence of their riots, described by Telemachus to have arisen to such a degree as to have almost ruined his kingdom, and made their demands impossible. I see nothing unnatural or mean in this interpretation, especially if we remember that the prodigious disorders of his family enter into the essence of the poem. The greater the disorders are, the greater are the sufferings of Ulysses.

V. 155. *How from my father should I vengeance dread ?*] There is an ambiguity in the word father; it may either signify Icarius or Ulysses, as Eustathius observes: but I think the context determines the person of Ulysses; for Telemachus believes him to be yet living, and consequently might fear his vengeance, if he offered any indignity to Penelope.

V. 157. *And while in wrath* *fiends she cries,*
How from their hell would vengeful fiends arise?

In the ninth Iliad we are told that the father of Phoenix imprecated the furies against his son:

‘ My sire with curses loads my hated head,
 And cries, ‘ Ye furies! barren be his bed.’
 Infernal Jove, the vengeful fiends below,
 And ruthless Proserpine, confirm’d his vow.’

In the same book the furies hear the curses of Althea upon her son:

‘ She beat the ground, and call’d the pow’rs beneath,
 On her own son to wreak her brother’s death.
 Hell heard her curses from the realms profound,
 And the fell fiends who walk the nightly round.’

These passages shew the opinion the ancients had of the honour due from children to parents, to be such, that they believed there were furies particularly commissioned to punish those who failed in that respect, and to fulfil the imprecations made against them by their offended parents. There is a greatness in this idea, and it must have had an effect upon the obedience of the youth. We see Telemachus is full of the sense of it. Dacier.

V. 171, &c. *The prodigy of the two eagles.*] This prodigy is ushered in very magnificently, and the verses are lofty and sonorous. The eagles are Ulysses and Telemachus: ‘ By Jove’s command they fly from a mountain’s height:’ this denotes that the two heroes are inspired by Jupiter, and come from the country to the destruction of the suitors: the eagles fly ‘ with wing to wing conjoin’d;’ this shews, that they act in concert and unity of counsels: ~~at first~~ they ‘ float upon the wind;’ this implies the calmness and secrecy of the approach of those heroes: at last they ‘ clang their wings, and hovering beat the skies;’ this shews the violence of the assault: ‘ with ardent eyes the rival train they threat.’ This, as the poet himself interprets it, denotes the approaching fate of the suitors. ‘ Then sailing o’er the domes and tow’rs they fly, Full tow’rd the east;’ this signifies that the suitors

alone are not doom'd to destruction, but that the men of Ithaca are involved in danger, as Halitherses interprets it :

‘ Nor to the great alone is death decreed ;
We, and our guilty Ithaca must bleed.

See here the natural explication of this prodigy, which is very ingenious! EUSTATHIUS, verbatim.

V. 203. *I see (I cry'd) his woes*
I see his friends o'erwhelm'd, &c.]

In three lines (observes Eustathius) the poet gives us the whole *Odyssey* in miniature : and it is wonderful to think, that so plain a subject should produce such variety in the process of it. Aristotle observes the simplicity of Homer's platform ; which is no more than this : a prince is absent from his country ; Neptune destroys his companions ; in his absence his family is disordered by many princes that address his wife, and plot against the life of his only son ; but at last after many storms he returns, punishes the suitors, and re-establishes his affairs : this is all that is essential to the poem, the rest of it is made up of episodes : and yet with what miracles of poetry (*speciosa miracula*, as Horace styles them) has he furnished out his poem ?

V. 207. *The speech of Eurymachus.]* It has been observed, that Homer is the father of oratory as well as poetry, and it must be confessed, that there is not any one branch of it, that is not to be found in his poetry. The invective, persuasive, ironical, &c. may all be gathered from it. Nothing can be better adapted to the purpose than this speech of Eurymachus : he is to decry the credit of the predictions of Halitherses : he derides, he threatens, and describes him as a venal prophet. He is speaking to the multitude, and endeavours to bring Halitherses into contempt, and in order to it he uses him contemptuously.

V. 239. *All the Greeks have heard my wrongs.]* It is necessary for the reader to carry in his mind, that this assembly consists not only of the peers, but of the people of Ithaca : for the people Telemachus here appeals.

to the air in the upper parts: for otherwise how could the eagles be visible to the suitors? and so very plainly, as to be discovered to threat them with their eyes? There was no doubt a place set apart for counsel, usually in the market: for Telemachus is said to seat himself in his father's throne, in the beginning of this book: but Ulysses had been absent twenty years; and therefore it is evident, that his throne had stood in the same place for the space of twenty years. It is past contradiction, that in Athens, and other cities of Greece, there were *Βουλευτήρια*, public halls for the consultation of affairs.

V. 254. *Mentor arose, Ulysses' faithful friend.*] The name of Mentor is another instance of the gratitude of our poet's temper, it being the same which belonged to a friend of his by whom he was entertained in Ithaca, during a defluxion on his eyes, which seized him in his voyages; and at whose house he is said to have laid the plan of this poem. This character of Mentor is well sustained by his speech, and by the assistance he gratefully gives to young Telemachus on all occasions.

V. 258. *Guard thou his age, and his behests obey.*] The original says only, 'Obey the old man.' Eustathius rightly determines, that the expression means Laertes. The poet loses no opportunity of giving Ulysses an excellent character; this is as necessary as continually to repeat the disorders of the suitors.

' Servetur ad imum

Qualis ab incepto processerit, et sibi constet.

This conduct contributes admirably to the design of the poem; and when the poet, in the unravelling of his fable, comes to reward and punish the chief actors, we acknowledge his justice in the death of the suitors, and re-establishment of Ulysses.

V. 264. *While the bowl circles, and the banquet warms.*] The original is not without obscurity: it says, *περί Δαίτι*, or, 'in the time of the banquet.' Eustathius interprets it, *τὸ οἶνον στρατηγῶν αὐτοῖς*, 'The wine as it were fighting on their side;' and this agrees with what follows.

The design of this speech is to deter the people of Ithaca from rising in the cause of Ulysses: Mentor speaks justly; Leocritus

insolently: Mentor sets before them the worth of Ulysses; Leocritus the power of the suitors: Mentor speaks like a brave man; Leocritus (observes Eustathius) like a coward, who wanting true courage, flies to the assistance of wine to raise a false one.

Perhaps it may be objected, that there is not a sufficient distinction in the characters of several suitors; they are all described as insolent voluptuaries. But though they agree in this general character, yet there is something distinguishing in the particular persons: thus Antinous derides, Eurymachus covers villainy with mildness; Antinous is ever the foremost in outrage, Eurymachus generally his second: a greater distinction is neither necessary, nor possible to be represented. What the poet is to describe, is the insolence of the suitors, and the disorders they create in his family and kingdom; he is obliged to dwell upon these circumstances, because they are essential to his design: and consequently that general resemblance of their characters is not a fault in the poet.

V. 291. *Then with a rushing sound, &c.*] The assembly which was convened by Telemachus is broke up in a riotous manner by Leocritus, who had no right to dissolve it. This agrees with the lawless state of the country in the absence of its king, and shews (says Eustathius) that the suitors had usurped the chief authority.

There is a fine contrast between the behaviour of Telemachus and that of the suitors. They return to repeat their disorders and debauches; Telemachus retires to supplicate the goddess of wisdom, to assist him in his enterprises. Thus the poet raises the character of Telemachus; he has shewn him to be a youth of a brave spirit, a good speaker, and here represents him as a person of piety.

V. 341. *Antinous's speech.*] This speech must be understood ironically: *εἰς τὴν ἐπὶ τῆς* is used as before, and has relation to the preceding harangues of Telemachus to the people, and his intended voyage; by way of derision Antinous bids him not trouble his brave spirit in contriving any more orations, or in any bold attempt to find out Ulysses; or to act the orator, or hero's part.

The critics have almost generally condemned these pieces of gaiety and raillery, as unworthy of heroic poetry: if ever they are proper, they must be so in the mouths of these suitors; persons of no serious or noble characters: mirth, wine, and feasting, is their constant employment; and consequently if they fall into absurdities, they act suitably to their characters. Milton, the best and greatest imitator of Homer, has followed him unworthily in this respect; I mean, has debased even this low raillery into greater lowness, by playing upon words and syllables. But in this place the raillery is not without its effect, by shewing the utmost contempt of Telemachus; and surely it is the lowest degree of calamity to be at once oppressed and despised.

V. 368. *To Pyle or Sparta to demand supplies.*] It is observable, says Eustathius, that the poet had in his choice several expedients to bring about the destruction of the suitors, but he rejects them, and chooses the most difficult method, out of reverence to truth, being unwilling to falsify the histories of Sparta and Pylos. This has a double effect; it furnishes the poet with a series of noble incidents; and also gives an air of probability to the story of Ulysses and Telemachus.

V. 378. *The royal palace to the queen convey.*] The suitors allot the palace to Penelope: it being, says Eustathius, the only thing that they cannot consume; and adds, that the expression of the suitors, concerning the labour they should undergo in dividing the substance of Ulysses, shews the wealth and abundance of that hero. Dacier has found out an allusion between *πορον* in the first speech, and *ωρον* in the second; they differing only in one letter: she calls this a beauty, which she laments she cannot preserve in her translation. She is the only commentator that ever was quick-sighted enough to make the discovery. The words have ~~no~~ relation; they stand at a sufficient distance; and I believe Homer would have thought such trifling unworthy of his poetry. So that all the honour which accrues from that observation must be ascribed (in this case, as in many others) to the commentator, and not the author.

V. 381. *Where lay the treasures of th' Ithacian race.*] Such

lery ; they think such household cares unworthy of a king, and that this conduct suits better with vulgar persons of less fortune. I confess, such descriptions now would be ridiculous in a poet, because unsuitable to our manners. But if we look upon such passages as pictures and exact representations of the old world, the reader will find a sensible pleasure in them.

It is a true observation, that the Iliad is chiefly suitable to the condition of kings and heroes ; and consequently filled with circumstances in which the greatest part of mankind have no concern or interest : the Odyssey is of more general use ; the story of it is a series of calamities, which concern every man, as every man may feel them. We can bring the sufferings of Ulysses in some degree home to ourselves, and make his condition our own ; but what private person can ever be in the circumstances of Agamemnon or Achilles ? What I would infer from this is, that the reader ought not to take offence at any such descriptions, which are only mean as they differ from the fashions of the latter ages. In the Iliad, Achilles, when he acts in the common offices of life, and not as a hero, is liable to the same objection. But if the manners of the ancient ages be considered, we shall be reconciled to the actions of the ancient heroes ; and consequently to Homer.

V. 394. *O thou, whose guardian care
Nurs'd the most wretched king. . . .*]

Euryclea was not properly the nurse of Telemachus, but of Ulysses ; so that she is called so not in a strict sense, but as one concerned in his education from his infancy, and as a general appellation of honour. Telemachus here reserves the best wines for Ulysses ; a lesson (observes Eustathius) that even in the smallest matters we ought to pay a deference to our parents. These occasional and seemingly trivial circumstances are not without their use, if not as poetical ornaments, yet as moral instructions.

V. 421. *Till twice six times descends the lamp of day.*] It may be demanded how it was probable (if possible), that the departure of Telemachus could be concealed twelve days from the

knowledge of so fond a mother as Penelope? It must be allowed, that this would not be possible, except in a time of such great disorder as the suitors created: Penelope confined herself almost continually within her own apartment, and very seldom appeared publicly; so that there is no improbability in this relation. DACIER.

Eustathius makes a criticism upon the words *αποφρονει* and *εποφρονει*: the former is used negatively, the latter affirmatively; namely, the former in swearing ‘not to perform’ a thing, the latter, ‘to perform it.’

V. 432. *She bids the mariners, &c.*] It is probable that this passage of Minerva preparing the mariners, &c. is thus to be understood: the men of Ithaca retaining in memory the speech of Telemachus, and believing what he then said, and now requests, was agreeable to justice; and having as it were his image graven upon their hearts, voluntarily resolve to lend him assistance: so that Minerva is to be taken allegorically, to imply that it was every person’s own reason that induced him to assist Telemachus. EUSTATHIUS.

V. 435. *Noemon . . . the bark supplies.*] It may be asked why this particularity is necessary, and may it not be thought that such a little circumstance is insignificant? The answer is, that a great deal depends upon this particularity; no less than the discovery of the voyage of Telemachus to the suitors; and consequently, whatever the suitors act in order to intercept him, takes its rise from this little incident; the fountain is indeed small, but a large stream of poetry flows from it.

V. 444. *There ev’ry eye with slumb’rous chains she bound.*] The words in the original are *νυθειν* and *νυπνῶ*, which are not to be taken for being asleep, but drowsy; this is evident from the usage of *καθ’νυθειν*, in the conclusion of the first book of the Iliad, where the signification has been mistaken by most translators: they make Jupiter there to be asleep; though two lines afterwards, in the second book, Homer expressly says,

‘Th’ immortals slumber’d on their thrones above;

All but the ever-wakeful eyes of Jove.’

It may be asked how Minerva can be said to occasion this drowsiness in the suitors, and make them retire sooner than usual? Eustathius replies, that the person who furnished the wine supplied it in greater quantities than ordinary, through which wine they contracted a drowsiness: in this sense Minerva, or wisdom, may be said to assist the designs of Telemachus.

V. 460. *She bids fresh breezes blow.*] This also is an allegory, and implies that the sailors had the experience and art to guide the ship before the winds; but poetry, that delights to raise every circumstance, exalts it into the marvellous, and ascribes it to the goddess of wisdom. EUSTATHIUS.

V. 464. *With speed the mast they rear.*] It is observable, that Homer never passes by an opportunity of describing the sea or a ship under sail; and in many other places, as well as in this, he dwells largely upon it: I take the reason to be, not only because it furnished him with a variety of poetical images, but because he himself having made frequent voyages, had a full idea of it, and consequently was delighted with it: this is evident from his conduct in the Iliad, where variety of allusions and similitudes are drawn from the sea, and are not the smallest ornaments of his poetry.

V. 470. *And crown with wine*

The holy goblet to the pow'rs divine.]

This custom of libations was frequent upon all solemn occasions, before meat, before sleep, voyages, journies, and in all religious rites, sacrifices, &c. They were always made with wine, pure and unmixed, whence *ακρατον* is a word frequent in ancient authors. Sometimes they used mixed wines in sacrifices; but Eustathius says, that this mixture was of wine with wine, and not of wine with water: hence came the distinction of *ευσπονδον* and *ασπονδον*, the unlawful and lawful libation; wine unmixed was lawful, the mixed unlawful. Homer in this place uses *επιστεφας κρηνηρας*, or ‘goblets crowned with wine;’ that is, filled till the wine stood above the brim of the goblet; they esteemed it an irreverence to the gods not to fill the cups full, for then only they esteemed the libation *whole and perfect*, *ολον και τελειον*.

This book takes up the space of one day and one night: it opens with the morning; the speeches in the council, with the preparations for the voyage of Telemachus, are the subject of the day; and the voyage is finished by the next morning. By this last circumstance we may learn that Ithaca was distant from Pylos but one night's voyage, nay something less, there being some time spent after the setting of the sun, in carrying the provisions from the palace to the vessel.

The book consists chiefly in the speeches of Telemachus and his friends against those of the suitors. It shews the great judgment of the poet in choosing this method: hence we see the causes preceding the effects, and know from what spring every action flowed: we are never at a loss for a reason for every incident; the speeches are as it were the groundwork upon which he builds all that relates to the adventures of Telemachus.

In the *Iliad*, after the dissolution of the council in the first book, and the dissension between Agamemnon and Achilles, we immediately see upon what hinge the fable turns. So in the *Odyssey*, after the poet has laid before us the warm debates between the suitors and Telemachus, we immediately expect them to act as enemies: the war is declared, and we become judges as well as spectators of the scenes of action. Thus Homer adds the perspicuity of history to the ornaments of poetry.

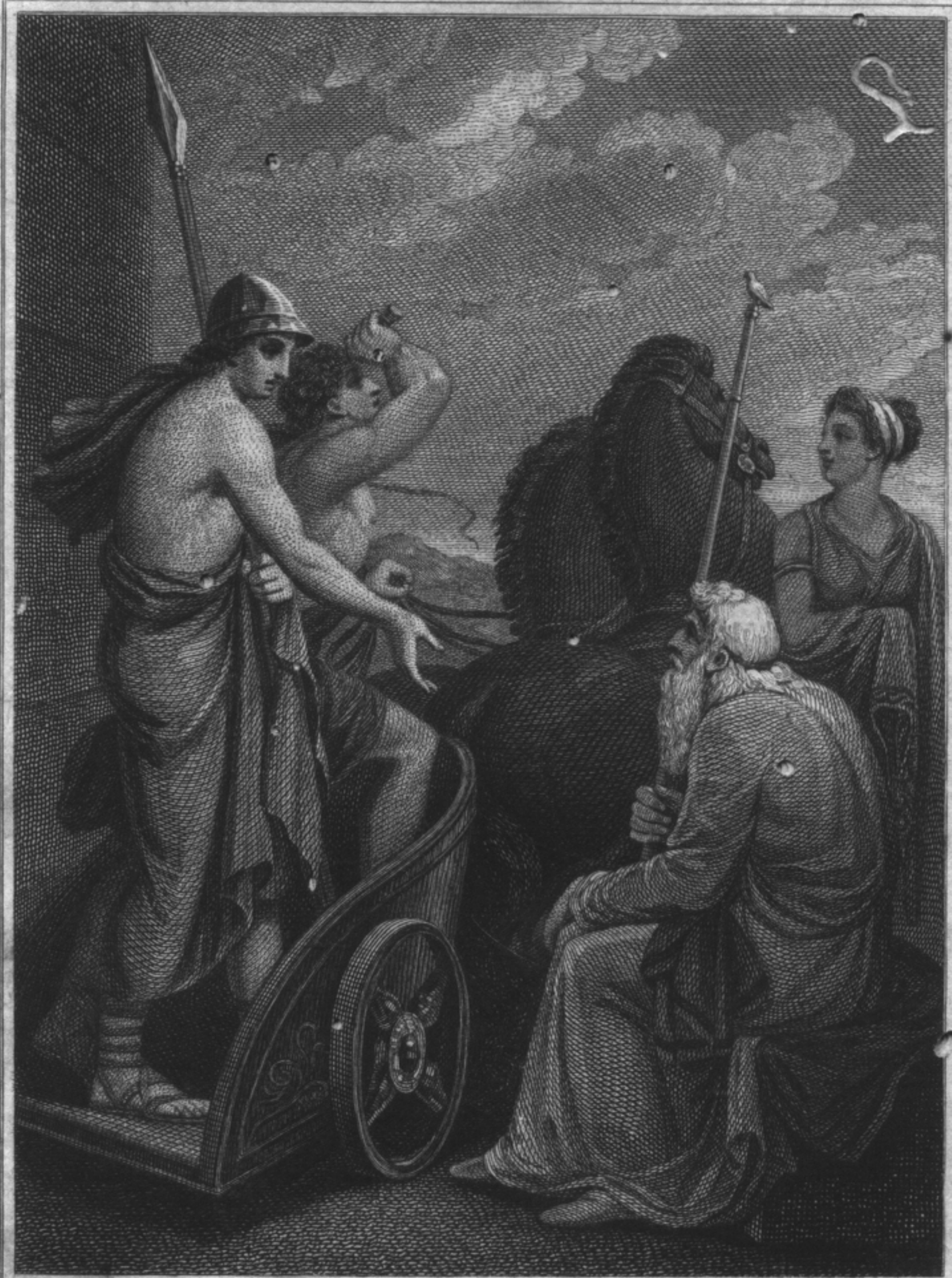
THE
THIRD BOOK
OF THE
ODYSSEY.

THE ARGUMENT.

THE INTERVIEW OF TELEMACHUS AND NESTOR.

TELEMACHUS, guided by Pallas in the shape of Mentor, arrives in the morning at Pylos, where Nestor and his sons are sacrificing on the sea-shore to Neptune. Telemachus declares the occasion of his coming; and Nestor relates what passed in their return from Troy, how their fleets were separated, and he never since heard of Ulysses. The discourse concerning the death of Agamemnon, the revenge of Orestes, and the injuries of the suitors. Nestor advises him to go to Sparta, and inquire further of Menelaus. The sacrifice ending with the night, Minerva vanishes from them in the form of an eagle: Telemachus is lodged in the palace. The next morning they sacrifice a bullock to Minerva, and Telemachus proceeds on his journey to Sparta, attended by Pisistratus.

The scene lies on the sea-shore of Pylos.



Painted by H. Howard A.

Engraved by Jos. Collyer A.

BOOK III.

'THE sacred sun, above the waters rais'd,
Through heav'n's eternal, brazen, portals blaz'd;
And wide o'er earth diffus'd his cheering ray,
To gods and men to give the golden day.
Now on the coast of Pyle the vessel falls, 5
Before old Neleus' venerable walls.
There, suppliant to the monarch of the flood,
At nine green theatres the Pylians stood;
Each held five hundred (a deputed train),
At each, nine oxen on the sand lay slain. 10
They taste the entrails, and the altars load
With smoking thighs, an off'ring to the god.
Full for the port the Ithacensians stand,
And furl their sails, and issue on the land,
Telemachus already prest the shore; 15
Not first, the pow'r of wisdom march'd before,
And ere the sacrificing throng he join'd,
Admonish'd thus his well-attending mind:

Proceed, my son! this youthful shame expel;
An honest business never blush to tell. 20

To learn what fates thy wretched sire detain,
 We past the wide immeasurable main.
 Meet then the senior far renown'd for sense,
 With rev'rend awe, but decent confidence:
 Urge him with truth to frame his fair replies; 25
 And sure he will; for wisdom never lies.

O tell me, Mentor! tell me, faithful guide,
 (The youth with prudent modesty replied)
 How shall I meet, or how accost the sage,
 Unskill'd in speech, nor yet mature of age? 30
 Awful th' approach, and hard the task appears,
 To question wisely men of riper years.

To whom the martial goddess thus rejoin'd:
 Search, for some thoughts, thy own suggesting
 mind;

And others, dictated by heav'nly pow'r, 35
 Shall rise spontaneous in the needful hour:
 For nought unprosp'rous shall thy ways attend,
 Born with good omens, and with heav'n thy friend.

She spoke, and led the way with swiftest speed:
 As swift, the youth pursu'd the way she led; 40
 And join'd the band before the sacred fire,
 Where sat, encompass'd with his sons, the sire.
 The youth of Pylos, some on pointed wood
 Transfix'd the fragments, some prepar'd the food.

In friendly throngs they gather, to embrace 45
 Their unknown guests, and at the banquet place.

Pisistratus was first, to grasp their hands,
 And spread soft hides upon the yellow sands;
 Along the shore th' illustrious pair he led,
 Where Nestor sat with youthful Thrasymed. 50

To each a portion of the feast he bore,
 And held a golden goblet foaming o'er;
 Then first approaching to the elder guest,
 The latent goddess in these words address:

Whoe'er thou art, whom fortune brings to keep
 These rites of Neptune, monarch of the deep, 56

Thee first it fits, O stranger! to prepare
 The due libation and the solemn pray'r;

Then give thy friend to shed the sacred wine:

Though much thy younger, and his years like mine,
 He too, I deem, implores the pow'rs divine: 61

For all mankind alike require their grace,
 All born to want; a miserable race!

He spake, and to her hand preferr'd the bowl:
 A secret pleasure touch'd Athena's soul, 65

To see the pref'rence due to sacred age
 Regarded ever by the just and sage.

Of ocean's king she then implores the grace.

O thou! whose arms this ample globe embrace,

Fulfil our wish, and let thy glory shine 70
 On Nestor first, and Nestor's royal line;
 Next grant the Pylian states their just desires,
 Pleas'd with their hecatomb's ascending fires;
 Last, deign Telemachus and me, to bless,
 And crown our voyage with desir'd success. 75

Thus she; and having paid the rite divine,
 Gave to Ulysses' son the rosy wine.
 Suppliant he pray'd. And now the victims drest
 They draw, divide, and celebrate the feast.
 The banquet done, the narrative old man, 80
 Thus mild, the pleasing conference began:

Now, gentle guests! the genial banquet o'er,
 It fits to ask ye, what your native shore,
 And whence your race? on what adventure, say,
 Thus far ye wander through the wat'ry way? 85
 Relate, if business, or the thirst of gain,
 Engage your journey o'er the pathless main:
 Where savage pirates seek through seas unknown
 The lives of others, vent'rous of their own.

Urg'd by the precepts by the goddess giv'n, 90
 And fill'd with confidence infus'd from heav'n,
 The youth, whom Pallas destin'd to be wise
 And fam'd among the sons of men, replies:

Inquir'st thou, father! from what coast we came?
 (O grace and glory of the Grecian name!) 95
 From where high Ithaca o'erlooks the floods,
 Brown with o'er-arching shades and pendent woods,
 Us to these shores our filial duty draws,
 A private sorrow, not a public cause.
 My sire I seek, where'er the voice of fame 100
 Has told the glories of his noble name,
 The great Ulysses; fam'd from shore to shore
 For valour much, for hardy suff'ring more.
 Long time with thee before proud Ilion's wall
 In arms he fought; with thee beheld' her fall. 105
 Of all the chiefs, this hero's fate alone
 Has Jove reserv'd, unheard of, and unknown;
 Whether in fields by hostile fury slain,
 Or sunk by tempests in the gulfy main?
 Of this to learn, oppress'd with tender fears, 110
 Lo, at thy knee his suppliant son appears.
 If or thy certain eye, or curious ear,
 Have learnt his fate, the whole dark story clear:
 And oh! whate'er heav'n destin'd to betide,
 Let neither flatt'ry smooth, nor pity hide. 115
 Prepar'd I stand: he was but born to try
 The lot of man; to suffer, and to die.

O then, if ever through the ten years' war
 The wise, the good Ulysses claim'd thy care;
 If e'er he join'd thy council, or thy sword, 120
 True in his deed, and constant to his word;
 Far as thy mind through backward time can see,
 Search all thy stores of faithful memory:
 'Tis sacred truth I ask, and ask of thee,

To him experienc'd Nestor thus rejoin'd: 125
 O friend! what sorrows dost thou bring to mind?
 Shall I the long, laborious, scene review,
 And open all the wounds of Greece anew?
 What toils by-sea! where dark in quest of prey
 Dauntless we rov'd; Achilles led the way: 130
 What toils by land! where mixt in fatal fight
 Such numbers fell, such heroes sunk to night:
 There Ajax great, Achilles there the brave,
 There wise Patroclus, fill an early grave:
 There too my son—ah once my best delight, 135
 Once swift of foot, and terrible in fight,
 In whom stern courage with soft virtue join'd,
 A faultless body, and a blameless mind:
 Antilochus—what more can I relate?
 How trace the tedious series of our fate? 140
 Not added years on years my task could close,
 The long historian of my country's woes:

Back to thy native islands might'st thou sail,
 And leave half-heard the melancholy tale.
 Nine painful years on that detested shore, 145
 What stratagems we form'd, what toils we bore?
 Still lab'ring on, till scarce at last we found
 Great Jove propitious, and our conquest crown'd.
 Far o'er the rest thy mighty father shin'd,
 In wit, in prudence, and in force of mind. 150
 Art thou the son of that illustrious sire?
 With joy I grasp thee, and with love admire.
 So like your voices, and your words so wise,
 Who finds thee younger must consult his eyes.
 Thy sire and I were one; nor varied ought 155
 In public sentence, or in private thought;
 Alike to council or th' assembly came,
 With equal souls, and sentiments the same.
 But when (by wisdom won) proud Ilion burn'd,
 And in their ships the conqu'ring Greeks return'd;
 'Twas God's high will the victors to divide, 161
 And turn th' event, confounding human pride:
 Some he destroy'd, some scatter'd as the dust;
 (Not all were prudent, and not all were just)
 Then Discord, sent by Pallas from above, 165
 Stern daughter of the great avenger Jove,

The brother-kings inspir'd with fell debate;
 Who call'd to council all th' Achaian state,
 But call'd untimely (not the sacred rite
 Observ'd, nor heedful of the setting light, 170
 Nor herald sworn the session to proclaim):
 Sour with debauch, a reeling tribe they came.
 To these the cause of meeting they explain,
 And Menelaüs moves to cross the main;
 Not so the king of men: he will'd to stay; 175
 The sacred rites and hecatombs to pay,
 And calm Minerva's wrath. Oh blind to fate!
 The gods not lightly change their love, or hate,
 With ireful taunts each other they oppose,
 Till in loud tumult all the Greeks arose. 180
 Now diff'rent counsels ev'ry breast divide,
 Each burns with rancour to the adverse side:
 Th' unquiet night strange projects entertain'd
 (So Jove, that urg'd us to our fate, ordain'd).
 We, with the rising morn our ships unmoor'd, 185
 And brought our captives and our stores aboard;
 But half the people with respect obey'd
 The king of men, and at his bidding stay'd.
 Now on the wings of winds our course we keep,
 (For God had smooth'd the waters of the deep)

For Tenedos we spread our eager oars, 191
 There land, and pay due victims to the pow'rs:
 To bless our safe return we join in pray'r,
 But angry Jove dispers'd our vows in air,
 And rais'd new discord. Then (so heav'n decreed)
 Ulysses first and Nestor disagreed: 196
 Wise as he was, by various counsels sway'd,
 He there, tho' late, to please the monarch, stay'd.
 But I, determin'd, stem the foamy floods,
 Warn'd of the coming fury of the gods. 200
 With us, Tydides fear'd, and urg'd his haste:
 And Menelaüs came, but came the last.
 He join'd our vessels in the Lesbian Bay,
 While yet we doubted of our wat'ry way;
 If to the right to urge the pilot's toil, 205
 (The safer road) beside the Psyrian isle;
 Or the straight course to rocky Chios plow,
 And anchor under Mimas' shagg'y brow?
 We sought direction of the pow'r divine:
 The god propitious gave the guiding sign; 210
 Through the mid seas he bid our navy steer,
 And in Eubœa shun the woes we fear.
 The whistling winds already wak'd the sky;
 Before the whistling winds the vessels fly,

With rapid swiftness cut the liquid way,
 And reach Gerestus at the point of day.
 There hecatombs of bulls, to Neptune slain,
 High-flaming please the monarch of the main.
 The fourth day shoné, when all their labours o'er
 Tydides' vessels touch'd the wish'd-for shore: 220
 But I to Pylos scud before the gales,
 The god still breathing on my swelling sails;
 Sep'rate from all, I safely landed here;
 Their fates or fortunes never reach'd my ear.
 Yet what I learn'd, attend; as here I sat, 225
 And ask'd each voyager each hero's fate;
 Curious to know, and willing to relate:
 Safe reach'd the Myrmidons their native land,
 Beneath Achilles' warlike son's command.
 Those, whom the heir of great Apollo's art, 230
 Brave Philoctetes, taught to wing the dart;
 And those whom Idomen from Ilion's plain
 Had led, securely cross'd the dreadful main.
 How Agamemnon touch'd his Argive coast,
 And how his life by fraud and force he lost, 235
 And how the murd'rer paid his forfeit breath;
 What lands so distant from that scene of death
 But trembling heard the fame? and, heard, admire
 How well the son appeas'd his slaughter'd sire!

E'en to th' unhappy, that unjustly bleed, 240
 Heav'n gives posterity, t' avenge the deed.
 So fell Egysthus; and may'st thou, my friend,
 (On whom the virtues of thy sire descend)
 Make future times thy equal act adore,
 And be what brave Orestes was before! 245

The prudent youth replied: O thou the grace
 And lasting glory of the Grecian race!
 Just was the vengeance, and to latest days
 Shall long posterity resound the praise.
 Some god this arm with equal prowess bless! 250
 And the proud suitors shall its force confess:
 Injurious men! who while my soul is sore
 Of fresh affronts, are meditating more.
 But heav'n denies this honour to my hand,
 Nor shall my father repossess the land: 255
 The father's fortune never to return,
 And the sad son's to suffer and to mourn!

Thus he; and Nestor took the word: My son,
 Is it then true, as distant rumours run,
 That crowds of rivals for thy mother's charms
 Thy palace fill with insults and alarms? 261
 Say, is the fault, through tame submission, thine?
 Or leagu'd against thee, do thy people join,
 Mov'd by some oracle, or voice divine?

And yet who knows, but rip'ning lies in fate 265
 An hour of vengeance for th' afflicted state;
 When great Ulysses shall suppress these harms,
 Ulysses singly, or all Greece in arms?
 But if Athena, war's triumphant maid,
 The happy son, will, as the father, aid, 270
 (Whose fame and safety was her constant care,
 In ev'ry danger and in ev'ry war:
 Never on man did heav'nly favour shine
 With rays so strong, distinguish'd and divine,
 As those with which Minerva mark'd thy sire)
 So might she love thee, so thy soul inspire! 276
 Soon should their hopes in humble dust be laid,
 And long oblivion of the bridal bed.

Ah! no such hope (the prince with sighs replies) •
 Can touch my breast; that blessing heav'n denies:
 E'en by celestial favour were it giv'n, 281
 Fortune or fate would cross the will of heav'n.

What words are these, and what imprudence
 thine?

(Thus interpos'd the martial maid divine)
 Forgetful youth! but know, the pow'r above 285
 With ease can save each object of his love;
 Wide as his will, extends his boundless grace;
 Nor lost in time, nor circumscrib'd by place.

Happier his lot, who many sorrows past,
 Long lab'ring gains his natal shore at last; 290
 Than who, too speedy, hastes to end his life
 By some stern ruffian, or adult'rous wife.
 Death only is the lot which none can miss,
 And all is possible to heav'n, but this.
 The best, the dearest fav'rite of the sky 295
 Must taste that cup, for man is born to die.

Thus check'd, replied Ulysses' prudent heir:
 Mentor, no more—the mournful thought forbear;
 For he no more must draw his country's breath,
 Already snatch'd by fate, and the black doom of
 death! 300

Pass we to other subjects; and engage
 On themes remote the venerable sage:
 (Who thrice has seen the perishable kind
 Of men decay, and through three ages shin'd,
 Like gods majestic, and like gods in mind) 305
 For much he knows, and just conclusions draws
 From various precedents, and various laws.
 O son of Neleus! awful Nestor, tell
 How he, the mighty Agamemnon, fell? 309
 By what strange fraud Egysthus wrought, relate,
 (By force he could not) such a hero's fate?

Liv'd Menelaüs not in Greece? or where
 Was then the martial brother's pious care?
 Condemn'd perhaps some foreign shore to tread;
 Or sure Egysthus had not dar'd the deed. 315

To whom the full of days: Illustrious youth,
 Attend (though partly thou hast guess'd) the truth:
 For had the martial Menelaüs found
 The ruffian breathing yet on Argive ground;
 Nor earth had hid his carcase from the skies, 320
 Nor Grecian virgins shriek'd his obsequies,
 But fowls obscene dismember'd his remains,
 And dogs had torn him on the naked plains,
 While us the works of bloody Mars employ'd,
 The wanton youth inglorious peace enjoy'd; 325
 He, stretch'd at ease in Argos' calm recess,
 (Whose stately steeds luxuriant pastures bless)
 With flattery's insinuating art
 Sooth'd the frail queen, and poison'd all her heart.
 At first with worthy shame and decent pride 330
 The royal dame his lawless suit denied.
 For virtue's image yet possess'd her mind,
 Taught by a master of the tuneful kind:
 Atrides, parting for the Trojan war,
 Consign'd the youthful consort to his care. 335

True to his charge, the bard preserv'd her long
 In honour's limits; such the pow'r of song.
 But when the gods these objects of their hate
 Dragg'd to destruction, by the links of fate;
 The bard they banish'd from his native soil, 340
 And left all helpless in a desert isle:
 There he, the sweetest of the sacred train,
 Sung dying to the rocks, but sung in vain.
 Then virtue was no more; her guard away,
 She fell, to lust a voluntary prey. 345
 E'en to the temple stalk'd th' adult'rous spouse,
 With impious thanks, and mockery of vows,
 With images, with garments, and with gold;
 And od'rous fumes from loaded altars roll'd.

Meantime from flaming Troy we cut the way,
 With Menelaüs, through the curling sea. 351
 But when to Sunium's sacred point we came,
 Crown'd with the temple of th' Athenian dame;
 Atrides' pilot, Phrontes, there expir'd;
 (Phrontes, of all the sons of men admir'd 355
 To steer the bounding bark with steady toil,
 When the storm thickens, and the billows boil)
 While yet he exercis'd the steerman's art,
 Apollo touch'd him with his gentle dart;

E'en with the rudder in his hand, he fell. 360
 To pay whose honours to the shades of hell,
 We check'd our haste, by pious office bound,
 And laid our old companion in the ground.
 And now the rites discharg'd, our course we keep
 Far on the gloomy bosom of the deep: 365
 Soon as Malæa's misty tops arise,
 Sudden the thund'rer blackens all the skies,
 And the winds whistle, and the surges roll
 Mountains on mountains, and obscure the pole.
 The tempest scatters, and divides our fleet; 370
 Part, the storm urges on the coast of Crete,
 Where winding round the rich Cydonian plain,
 The streams of Jardan issue to the main.
 There stands a rock, high eminent and steep,
 Whose shaggy brow o'erhangs the shady deep,
 And views Gortyna on the western side; 376
 On this rough Auster drove th' impetuous tide:
 With broken force the billows roll'd away,
 And heav'd the fleet into the neighb'ring bay;
 Thus sav'd from death, they gain'd the Phæstan
 shores, 380
 With shatter'd vessels, and disabled oars:
 But five tall barks the winds and waters tost,
 Far from their fellows, on th' Egyptian coast.

There wander'd Menelaus through foreign shores,
 Amassing gold, and gath'ring naval stores; 385
 While curs'd Egysthus the detested deed
 By fraud fulfill'd, and his great brother bled.
 Sev'n years the traitor rich Mycenæ sway'd,
 And his stern rule the groaning land obey'd;
 The eighth, from Athens to his realm restor'd, 390
 Orestes brandish'd the revenging sword,
 Slew the dire pair, and gave to fun'ral flame
 The vile assassin, and adult'rous dame.
 That day, ere yet the bloody triumphs cease,
 Return'd Atrides to the coast of Greece, 395
 And safe to Argos' port his navy brought,
 With gifts of price, and pond'rous treasure fraught.
 Hence warn'd, my son, beware! nor idly stand
 Too long a stranger to thy native land;
 Lest heedless absence wear thy wealth away, 400
 While lawless feasters in thy palace sway;
 Perhaps may seize thy realm, and share the spoil;
 And thou return, with disappointed toil,
 From thy vain journey, to a rifled isle.
 Howe'er, my friend, indulge one labour more,
 And seek Atrides on the Spartan shore.
 He, wand'ring long, a wider circle made,
 And many-languag'd nations has survey'd;

And measur'd tracts unknown to other ships,
 Amid the monstrous wonders of the deeps: 410
 (A length of ocean and unbounded sky,
 Which scarce the sea-fowl in a year o'erfly)
 Go then; to Sparta take the wat'ry way,
 Thy ship and sailors but for orders stay;
 Or if by land thou choose thy course to bend, 415
 My steeds, my chariots, and my sons attend:
 Thee to Atrides they shall safe convey,
 - Guides of thy road, companions of thy way.
 Urge him with truth to frame his free replies;
 And sure he will; for Menelaus is wise. 420

Thus while he speaks, the ruddy sun descends,
 And twilight grey her ev'ning shade extends.
 Then thus the blue-ey'd maid: O full of days!
 Wise are thy words, and just are all thy ways.
 Now immolate the tongues, and mix the wine,
 Sacred to Neptune and the pow'rs divine.
 The lamp of day is quench'd beneath the deep,
 And soft approach the balmy hours of sleep:
 Nor fits it to prolong the heav'nly feast,
 Timeless, indecent, but retire to rest. 430

So spake Jove's daughter, the celestial maid.
 The sober train attended and obey'd.

The sacred heralds on their hands around
 Pour'd the full urns; the youths the goblets crown'd:
 From bowl to bowl the holy bev'rage flows; 435
 While to the final sacrifice they rose.
 The tongues they cast upon the fragrant flame,
 And pour, above, the consecrated stream.
 And now, their thirst by copious draughts allay'd,
 The youthful hero and th' Athenian maid 440
 Propose departure from the finish'd rite,
 And in their hollow bark to pass the night:
 But this the hospitable sage denied:
 Forbid it, Jove! and all the gods! he cried,
 Thus from my walls the much-lov'd son to send
 Of such a hero, and of such a friend! 446
 Me, as some needy peasant, would ye leave,
 Whom heav'n denies the blessing to relieve?
 Me would you leave, who boast imperial sway,
 When beds of royal state invite your stay? 450
 No—long as life this mortal shall inspire,
 Or as my children imitate their sire,
 Here shall the wand'ring stranger find his home,
 And hospitable rites adorn the dome.

Well hast thou spoke (the blue-ey'd maid replies),
 Belov'd old man! benevolent, as wise, 456

Be the kind dictates of thy heart obey'd,
 And let thy words Telemachus persuade:
 He to thy palace shall thy steps pursue;
 I to the ship, to give the orders due, 460
 Prescribe directions, and confirm the crew:
 For I alone sustain their naval cares,
 Who boast experience from these silver hairs;
 All youths the rest, whom to this journey move
 Like years, like tempers, and their prince's love.
 There in the vessel I shall pass the night; 466
 And soon as morning paints the fields of light,
 I go to challenge from the Caucons bold
 A debt, contracted in the days of old.
 But this thy guest, receiv'd with friendly care,
 Let thy strong coursers swift to Sparta bear; 471
 Prepare thy chariot at the dawn of day,
 And be thy son companion of his way.

Then turning with the word, Minerva flies,
 And soars an eagle through the liquid skies: 475
 Vision divine! the throng'd spectators gaze
 In holy wonder fix'd, and still amaze.
 But chief the rev'rend sage admir'd; he took
 The hand of young Telemachus, and spoke:
 O happy youth! and favour'd of the skies, 480
 Distinguish'd care of guardian deities!

Whose early years for future worth engage,
 No vulgar manhood, no ignoble age.
 For lo! none other of the court above
 Than she, the daughter of almighty Jove, 485
 Pallas herself, the war-triumphant maid,
 Confess'd is thine, as once thy father's aid.
 So guide me, goddess! so propitious shine
 On me, my consort, and my royal line!
 A yearling bullock to thy name shall smoke, 490
 Untam'd, unconscious of the galling yoke,
 With ample forehead, and yet tender horns,
 Whose budding honours ductile gold adorns.

Submissive thus the hoary sire preferr'd
 His holy vow: the fav'ring goddess heard. 495
 Then slowly rising, o'er the sandy space
 Precedes the father, follow'd by his race,
 (A long procession) timely marching home
 In comely order to the regal ~~dome~~ 499
 There when arrived, on thrones around him plac'd,
 His sons and grandsons the wide circle grac'd.
 To these the hospitable sage, in sign
 Of social welcome, mix'd the racy wine
 (Late from the mellowing cask restor'd to light,
 By ten long years refin'd, and rosy-bright). 505

To Pallas high the foaming bowl he crown'd,
 And sprinkled large libations on the ground.
 Each drinks a full oblivion of his cares,
 And to the gifts of balmy sleep repairs.
 Deep in a rich alcove the prince was laid, 510
 And slept beneath the pompous colonnade;
 Fast by his side Pisistratus lay spread,
 (In age his equal) on a splendid bed:
 But in an inner court, securely clos'd,
 The rev'rend Nestor and his queen repos'd. 515

When now Aurora, daughter of the dawn,
 With rosy lustre purpled o'er the lawn;
 The old man early rose, walk'd forth, and sat
 On polish'd stone before his palace gate:
 With unguents smooth the lucid marble shone,
 Where ancient Neleus sat, a rustic throne; 521
 But he descending to th' infernal shade,
 Sage Nestor ~~gave~~ it, and the sceptre sway'd.
 His sons around him mild obeisance pay,
 And duteous take the orders of the day. 525
 First Echephron and Stratius quit their bed;
 Then Perseus, Aretus, and Thrasymed;
 The last Pisistratus arose from rest:
 They came, and near him plac'd the stranger-guest.

To these the senior thus declar'd his will: 530

My sons! the dictates of your sire fulfil.

To Pallas, first of gods, prepare the feast,

Who grac'd our rites, a more than mortal guest.

Let one, dispatchful, bid some swain to lead

A well-fed bullock from the grassy mead; 535

One seek the harbour where the vessels moor,

And bring thy friends, Telemachus! ashore;

(Leave only two the galley to attend)

Another to Laerceus must we send,

Artist divine, whose skilful hands infold 540

The victim's horn with circumfusile gold.

The rest may here the pious duty share,

And bid the handmaids for the feast prepare,

The seats to range, the fragrant wood to bring,

And limpid waters from the living spring. 545

He said, and busy each his care bestow'd;

Already at the gates the bullock low

Already came the Ithacensian crew,

The dex'trous smith the tools already drew;

His pond'rous hammer, and his anvil sound, 550

And the strong tongs to turn the metal round.

Nor was Minerva absent from the rite,

She view'd her honours, and enjoy'd the sight.

With rev'rend hand the king presents the gold,
Which round th' intorted horns the gilder roll'd;
So wrought, as Pallas might with pride behold.

Young Aretus from forth his bridal bow'r
Brought the full ~~l~~ver, o'er their hands to pour,
And canisters of consecrated flour.

Stratius and Echephron the victim led; 560

The ax was held by warlike Thrasymed,
In act to strike: before him Perseus stood,
The vase extending to receive the blood.

The king himself initiates to the pow'r;
Scatters with quiv'ring hand the sacred flour; 565

And the stream sprinkles: from the curling brows
The hair collected in the fire he throws.

Soon as due vows on ev'ry part were paid,
And sacred wheat upon the victim laid,

Strong Thrasymed discharg'd the speeding blow
Full on his ~~neck~~, and cut the nerves in two. 571

Down sunk the heavy beast: the females round,
Maids, wives, and matrons, mix a shrilling sound.

Nor scorn'd the queen the holy choir to join
(The first-born she, of old Clymenus' line; 575

In youth by Nestor lov'd, of spotless fame,
And lov'd in age, Eurydice by name).

From earth they rear him, struggling now with
death;

And Nestor's youngest stops the vents of breath.

The soul for ever flies: on all sides round 580

Streams the black blood, and smokes upon the
ground.

The beast they then divide, and disunite

The ribs and limbs, observant of the rite:

On these, in double cawls involv'd with art,

The choicest morsels lay from ev'ry part. 585

The sacred sage before his altar stands,

Turns the burnt-off'ring with his holy hands,

And pours the wine, and bids the flames aspire:

The youth with instruments surround the fire.

The thighs now sacrific'd, and entrails drest, 590

Th' assistants part, transfix, and boil the rest.

While these officious tend the rites divine,

The last fair branch of the Nestor's line,

Sweet Polycaste, took the pleasing toil

To bathe the prince, and pour the fragrant oil.

O'er his fair limbs a flow'ry vest he threw, 596

And issu'd, like a god, to mortal view.

His former seat beside the king he found,

(His people's father with his peers around)

All plac'd at ease the holy banquet join, 600
And in the dazzling goblet laughs the wine.

The rage of thirst and hunger now supprest,
The monarch turns him to his royal guest;
And for the promis'd journey bids prepare
The smooth-hair'd horses, and the rapid car. 605
Observant of his word, the word scarce spoke,
The sons obey, and join them to the yoke.
Then bread and wine a ready handmaid brings,
And presents, such as suit the state of kings.
The glitt'ring seat Telemachus ascends: 610
His faithful guide, Pisistratus attends;
With hasty hand the ruling reins he drew:
He lash'd the coursers, and the coursers flew.
Beneath the bounding yoke alike they held
Their equal pace, and smok'd along the field. 615
The tow'rs of Pylos sink, its views decay,
Fields after ~~fields~~ fly back, till close of day:
Then sunk the sun, and darken'd all the way.

To Pheræ now, Diocleus' stately seat,
(Of Alpheus' race) the weary youths retreat. 620
His house affords the hospitable rite,
And pleas'd they sleep (the blessing of the night).
But when Aurora, daughter of the dawn,

Again they mount, their journey to renew, 625

And from the sounding portico they flew.

Along the waving fields their way they hold,

The fields receding as the chariot roll'd:

Then slowly sunk the ruddy globe of light, 629

And o'er the shaded landscape rush'd the night.

SELECT NOTES

TO

BOOK III.

THE scene is now removed from Ithaca to Pylos, and with it a new vein of poetry is opened: instead of the riots of the suitors, we are entertained with the wisdom and piety of Nestor. This and the following book are a kind of supplement to the Iliad: the nature of epic poetry requires that something should be left to the imagination of the reader, nor is the picture to be entirely drawn at full length. Homer, therefore, to satisfy our curiosity, gives an account of the fortunes of those great men, who made so noble a figure at the siege of Troy. This conduct also shews his art: variety gives life and delight; and it is much more necessary in epic, than in comic or tragic poetry, sometimes to shift the scenes, to diversify and embellish the story. But as on the stage the poet ought not to step at once from one part of the world to a remote country (for this destroys credibility, and the auditor cannot fancy himself this minute here, and the next a thousand miles distant), so in epic poetry, every removal must be within the degrees of probability. We have here a very easy transition; the poet carries ~~his~~ hero no farther than he really might sail in the compass of time he allots for his voyage. If he had still dwelt upon the disorders of the suitors without interruption, he must grow tiresome; but he artfully breaks the thread of their story with beautiful incidents and episodes, and reserves the further recital of their disorders for the end of his poem: by this method we sit down with fresh appetite to the entertainment, and rise at last not cloyed, but satisfied.

V. 2. *Through heav'n's eternal, brazen portals....*] The original calls heaven *αολοχρυσον*, or brazen; the reason of it arises either from the palaces of the gods being built of brass by Vul-

can; or rather the word implies no more than the stability of heaven, which in other places is called σιδηρεῖον, or framed of iron. EUSTATHIUS.

V. 8. *At nine green theatres.*] It may be asked why the poet is so very particular as to mention that the Pyliaræ were divided into nine assemblies; and may it not seem a circumstance of no importance? Eustathius answers from the ancients, that there were nine cities subject to the power of Nestor; five in Pylos, the rest in Bœotia: the poet therefore allots one bank or theatre to every city, which consisted of five hundred men, the whole number amounting to four thousand five hundred: these cities furnished the like complement of men to Nestor for the war at Troy: he sailed in ninety vessels, and allowing fifty men to each vessel, they amount to that number. Hence it appears that this was a national sacrifice; every city furnished nine bulls, and by consequence the whole nation were partakers of it.

V. 8. *The sacrifice of the Pylians.*] This was a very solemn sacrifice of the Pylians: how comes it then to pass, that Homer passes it over in one line? Eustathius answers, that the occasion disallows a longer description, and Homer knows when to speak, and when to be silent. He chooses to carry on the adventures of Telemachus, rather than amuse himself in descriptions that contribute nothing to the story; he finds a time of more leisure in the latter part of this book, and there he describes it at length.

V. 11. *They taste the entrails.*] That is, every person eat a small portion of the sacrifice, and by this method every person became partaker of it.

There is nothing in Homer that shews where this sacrifice was offered, whether in a temple, or in the open air. But Eustathius tells us from Strabo, that it was in the temple of Samian Neptune, ἐν ἱερῷ Σαμίων Ποσειδῶν.

V. 25. *Urge him with truth to frame his fair replies;
And sure he will; for wisdom never lies.*]

This sentiment is truly noble, and as nobly expressed: the simplicity of the diction corresponds with that of the thought. Homer in many places testifies the utmost abhorrence of a lie. This

verse is twice repeated in the present book, as in some others, and nothing can be stronger in the same view than that of Achilles in the ninth Iliad:

‘ Who dares think one thing, and another tell,
My heart detests him as the gates of hell.’

V. 38. *Born with good omens, and with heav’n thy friend.*] There is some obscurity in the Greek expression, and the ancient critics have made it more obscure by their false interpretations; they imagine that the poet only meant to say, that Telemachus was the legitimate son of Penelope and Ulysses. EUSTATHIUS.

Dacier very justly condemns this explication, as unworthy of Homer; and gives us a more plain and natural interpretation, viz. ‘ You were not born in despite of the gods; that is, you are well made, and of a good presence, you have good inclinations, and, in a word, your birth is happy.’ She explains *τρεφεμαι* after the same manner: ‘ You were not educated in despite of the gods;’ that is, ‘ the gods have blessed your education.’ This explication seems to be just, and answers perfectly the design of Minerva; which was to give a decent assurance to Telemachus: you are a person, says the goddess, of a good presence, and happy education, why then should you be ashamed to appear before Nestor?

V. 74. *Last, deign Telemachus and me to bless....*] Since Minerva here mentions the name of Telemachus in her prayer, how comes it to pass, that Nestor is at a loss to know Telemachus? Minerva sat close by Nestor; he must therefore be supposed to hear the prayer; and yet in the following lines he inquires who these strangers are. We can scarce imagine Nestor ignorant that the son of Ulysses was named Telemachus, there being so strict a friendship between Nestor and Ulysses. Perhaps therefore Minerva prayed in secret mentally; or perhaps Nestor might not take notice of what was not addressed immediately to him, and consequently make inquiry about it for the greater certainty.

V. 86. *Relate, if business, or the thirst of gain, &c.*] If we form our images of persons and actions in ancient times, from the images of persons and actions in modern ages, we shall fall

into great mistakes: thus in the present passage, if we annex the same idea of piracy, as it was practised three thousand years past, to piracy as it is practised in our ages, what can be a greater affront than this inquiry of Nestor? But, says Eustathius, piracy was formerly not only accounted lawful, but honourable. I doubt not but Thucydides had this passage in view, when he says, that the ancient poets introduce men inquiring of those who frequent the sea, if they be pirates, as a thing no way ignominious. Thucydides tells us in the same place, that all those who lived on the sea-coast, or in the islands, maintained themselves by frequent inroads upon unfortified towns, and if such piracies were nobly performed, they were accounted glorious. Herodotus also writes, that many of the ancients, especially about Thrace, thought it ignominious to live by labouring the ground; but to live by piracy and plunder was esteemed a life of honour. EUSTATHIUS.

V. 125. *The speech of Nestor.*] Eustathius observes the modesty of Nestor: Telemachus had ascribed the fall of Troy in a great measure to Nestor; but Nestor speaks not in particular of himself, but is content with his share of glory in common with other warriors; he speaks in the plural number, and joins all the Greeks as in the war, so in the glory of it. Nestor mentions the sufferings of the Greeks by sea, as well as by land, during the siege of Troy: to understand this, it is necessary to remember, that the Greeks made many expeditions against other places during the war, both by sea and land, as appears from many passages in the Iliad, particularly from what Achilles says in the ninth book.

V. 133. *There Ajax great, Achilles there we leave.*] I have observed, that the poet inserts into the Odyssey several incidents that happened after the fall of Troy, and by that method agreeably diversifies his poetry, and satisfies the curiosity of the reader. Eustathius remarks here, that he gives a title of honour to all the heroes he mentions, except only to Achilles. Achilles had been the occasion of the sufferings and death of many of the Greeks by his anger, and obstinacy in refusing to obey Agamemnon; therefore while Nestor is lamenting the calamities of the Greeks, he passes over Achilles without any honourable mention, who had

so greatly added to their sufferings. But I think this remark chimerical: one may as well say Achilles needed no epithet to distinguish him.

It is with pleasure I see the old man dwell upon the praise of Antilochus: the father enlarges upon the fame of the son; he gives him four epithets of glory; and while Ajax is only praised as a warrior, Antilochus is great and good, excellent in the standing fight, or swift to pursue an enemy. Longinus has observed upon the beauty of this passage.

V. 149. *Far o'er the rest thy mighty father shin'd.*] Nestor speaks of Ulysses as an inseparable friend; and it shews an excellent disposition in them both, to be rivals, and yet without envy. But the art of Nestor is remarkable; he first gives the character to Ulysses of being superior in wisdom to all the Greeks; and yet at last he finds a way secretly to set himself on a level with him, if not above him: we ever, says he, thought the same thoughts, and were ever of the same sentiments; which though it may imply that they were of equal wisdom, yet there is room left for it to signify, that Ulysses always assented to the wisdom of Nestor. EUSTATHIUS.

V. 157. *The council or the assembly.*] There is a remarkable difference between *βουλή* and *ἀγορά*. The former denotes a select number of men assembled in council, the latter a public assembly where all the people were present. EUSTATHIUS.

V. 165. *Sent by Pallas. . . .*] Nestor in modesty conceals the reason of the anger of the goddess, out of respect to Ajax the Locran, who was then dead: the crime of Ajax was the violation of Cassandra, even in the temple of Minerva, before her image. But why should the goddess be angry at others for the crime of Ajax? This is because they omitted to punish the offender. If Ajax was criminal in offending, others are criminal for not punishing the offence. EUSTATHIUS.

V. 168, &c. *Who call'd to council*

But call'd untimely, &c.]

It may seem at first view, that the poet affirms the night to be an improper season to convene a council. This is not his meaning:

in the *Iliad*, there are several councils by night; nay, *νυκτὶ βουλῇ* is used proverbially to express the best concerted councils. What therefore Nestor here condemns is the calling not a select, but a public assembly of the soldiers in the night, when they are in no danger of an enemy, and when they are apt to fly into insolence through wine and the joy of victory. The night is then undoubtedly an ill chosen season; because the licence of the soldier cannot be so well restrained by night as by day. EUSTATHIUS.

V. 177. *Oh blind to fate!*] It may be asked why Nestor condemns so solemnly this hero, calling him *Νηπιόχῳ*, when he describes him in so pious an action? This is not because the gods are implacable, for as Homer himself writes, *Στρατιῶτες δὲ καὶ θεοὶ αὐτοὶ*; but because he vainly imagined that they would so soon be appeased, without any justice done upon the offender; *ὅτιν γὰρ ὡς παλιντρέπον* are the words of Eustathius.

V. 197. *Wise as he was, by various counsels sway'd,
He there, though late, to please the monarch, stay'd.]*

It is with great address that Nestor relates the return of Ulysses to Agamemnon; he ascribes it not directly to Ulysses, but to his associates in the voyage; he mollifies it, in complaisance to Telemachus. But Nestor, according to Dacier, conceals the true reason of his return; it was not to please Agamemnon, but out of fear of the goddess Minerva, whose statue he had taken by force from Troy: to appease that goddess, he returns to join in sacrifice with Agamemnon.

V. 200. *Warn'd of the coming fury of the gods.]* It may be asked how Nestor attained this knowledge of the evils which the gods were preparing? Eustathius ascribes it to his great wisdom, which gave him an insight into futurity. Dacier, with more reason, tells us, that Nestor knew that Minerva had been offended, and might consequently apprehend a punishment was to be inflicted for the offence.

V. 221. *But I to Pylos, &c.]* Eustathius observes from the ancients, that the poet with great judgment suspends, and breaks off this relation of Nestor; by this method he has an opportunity

to carry Telemachus to other countries, and insert into his poem the story of Menelaus and Helen: this method likewise gives an air of probability to what he writes; the poet seems afraid to deceive, and when he sends Telemachus to other parts for better intelligence, he seems to consult truth and exactness.

V. 229. *Achilles' warlike son.*] The son of Achilles was named Neoptolemus, by others Pyrrhus; his story is this: when he had reached Thessaly with the Myrmidons of Achilles, by the advice of Thetis he set fire to his vessels; and being warned by Helenus, from the oracles, to fix his habitation where he found a house whose foundations were iron, whose walls were wood, and whose roof was wool; he took his journey on foot, and coming to a certain lake of Epirus, he found some persons fixing their spears with the point downwards into the earth, and covering the tops of them with their cloaks, and after this manner making their tents: he looked upon the oracle as fulfilled, and dwelt there. Afterwards having a son by Andromache the wife of Hector, he named him Molossus, from whom the region took the name of Molossia. From this country are the Molossi canes, mentioned by Virgil. EUSTATHIUS.

V. 242. *So fell Egysthus; and may'st thou, my friend, &c.*] Nestor introduces the mention of Egysthus very artfully; it is to raise an emulation in Telemachus to revenge Ulysses, as Orestes had Agamemnon: it has the intended effect, and we find that Telemachus dwells upon his story with a virtuous envy, yet at the same time with great modesty; Eustathius gives a different reading in

..... εσσομενοισι πρῶτα, or
εσσομενονσιν αἰδῶν.

Both the expressions are used in Homer, the preference is therefore submitted to the reader.

V. 264. *Mov'd by some oracle, or voice divine?*] The words in the original are, 'following the voice of some god,' that is, some oracle; Homer does not confine the expression either to a good or bad sense, but the context plainly shews, that they must be understood in a bad sense; namely, to imply, that the people had recourse to pretended oracles to justify their rebellion. This

is evident from what follows, where Nestor encourages Telemachus to expect that Ulysses may punish them for their crimes, ἀποτισέσθαι ἐλθων—'if there had been no crime, there ought to be no punishment.'

V. 268. *Ulysses singly, or all Greece in arms.*] The poet shews his great judgment in preparing the reader for the destruction of the suitors; that great catastrophe is managed by few hands, and it might seem incredible that so few could destroy so many: the poet therefore, to give an air of truth to his action, frequently inculcates the assistance of Pallas, which must at least shew, that such a great exploit is not impossible to be executed by stratagems and valour: it is by art, not strength, that Ulysses conquers.

'All Greece in arms.'

This is spoken in a general sense, and comprehends not only the subjects of Ulysses, or even the Pylians and Spartans, but implies, that all the Greeks would rise in the cause of Ulysses. What the suitors had spoken scoffingly in the preceding book, that Telemachus was sailing to Pyle or Sparta for supplies, appears in this not to be impracticable; so that it was choice, and not necessity, that determined the poet to make use of no such easy expedients for the destruction of the suitors. EUSTATHIUS.

It may be added, that the very nature of epic poetry, and of the Odyssey in particular, requires such a conduct: in the Iliad, Achilles is the chief agent, and performs almost all the great actions; Æneas is painted after the same manner by Virgil; the one kills Hector, the other Turnus, both which are the decisive actions: it was equally necessary to exalt the character of Ulysses, by bringing him into difficulties from which he is personally to extricate himself: this the poet sufficiently brings about by refusing all the easy methods for his re-establishment, because the more difficult ways are most conducive to the honour of his hero: thus as Achilles and Æneas kill Hector and Turnus with their own hands, so the suitors fall chiefly by the hand of Ulysses.

* It is necessary for the hero of the poem to execute the decisive action, for by this method the poet completes his character, his own greatness surmounts all difficulties, and he goes off the stage

with the utmost advantage, by leaving a noble character upon the mind of the spectators.

V. 282. *Fortune or fate would cross the will of heav'n.*] It may be asked how an expression so near blasphemy, as Eustathius observes, could escape a person of such piety as Telemachus? It is true, the poet makes Minerva herself correct it; but yet the objection remains, viz. how could Telemachus speak it? I think, since the poet himself condemns it, we may give it up as an indecency in Telemachus; it is natural for men in despair (and that was the condition of Telemachus) to use a vehemence of expression, and this might transport Telemachus beyond the bounds of prudence. The only possible way that occurs to me to take off the impiety, is to have recourse to destiny: it was the opinion of the ancients, that the gods could not alter destiny: and then Telemachus may mean no more, than that it was decreed by the destinies that Ulysses should return no more, so the gods themselves could not restore him.

Thus in the xvth of the Metamorphosis, Venus in vain applies to the gods to preserve Julius Cæsar:

‘ Superosque movet, qui rumpere quancquam
Ferreæ non possunt veterum decreta sororum,’ &c.

And a little lower Jupiter says to Venus,

‘ Sola insuperabile fatum,
Nata, movere paras?’

V. 289. *Happier his lot, who, &c.*] Nothing can be better imagined to encourage Telemachus, than what the poet here delivers: Minerva sets Agamemnon in opposition to Ulysses; Agamemnon made a speedy voyage to his country, and there fell by treachery; Ulysses has long been absent, but yet is happier than Agamemnon: the gods perhaps reserve him for better fortunes, at least nothing can be concluded from his long absence, and this is sufficient to teach Telemachus not to despair.
EUSTATHIUS.

V. 294. *And all is possible to heav'n, but this.*] What Mi-

Telemachus seemed to have spoken rashly, may be softened, if not vindicated, by having recourse to destiny: it is evident from this passage, that destiny was superior to the power of the gods; otherwise Minerva speaks as blasphemously as Telemachus: for what difference is there between saying, that the gods cannot preserve even those they love from death, and saying that the gods could not save Ulysses? Why therefore may not the words of Telemachus be thought to have a respect to destiny?

I am of opinion, that the poet had something further in view by putting these words into the mouth of Minerva: the words of Telemachus, if taken grossly, might appear shocking to so pious a person as Nestor, and make an ill impression upon him, to the disadvantage of Telemachus; Minerva therefore artfully explains it, and softens the horror of it by reconciling it to the theology of those ages.

V. 301. *Pass we to other subjects.*] Telemachus here puts several questions, as it were in a breath, to Nestor: and Plutarch observes upon this passage, that he who inquires any thing of an old man, though the old man himself has no concern in the story, wins his heart at once; and incites a person, who is upon all occasions very willing to discourse. He introduces this as an instance of the art Telemachus uses, in adapting himself by his questions to the temper of the person with whom he converses: he puts together, continues he, several questions upon several subjects, which is more judicious than to confine his answer to a single interrogatory, and by that method deprive Nestor of one of the most pleasant enjoyments of old age, I mean the pleasure of talking. PLUTARCH. SYMPOSIAC.

V. 303. *Who thrice had seen the perishable kind
Of men decay*]

The poet here tells us that Nestor was now in his fourth generation: Ovid took the word *γυνα* to signify an hundred years; but then Nestor must have been above three hundred years old. Others with more probability understand it to signify a generation, or such a portion of time in which any race of men flourish

together, which is computed to be about thirty years. I refer the reader to the note on the 333d verse of the first book of the Iliad, for the particular age of Nestor. According to that computation, he must now be about ninety-five years of age.

V. 309. *How he, the mighty Agamemnon, felt?*] Telemachus does not ask this question out of curiosity, but with great judgment; he knows there were designs against his life, as well as there had been against Agamemnon; he therefore asks it, that he may learn how to defeat them; chiefly to instruct himself how best to assist his father, upon his return, by aiding him in escaping the snares of the suitors. DACIER.

V. 333. *Taught by a master of the tuneful kind.*] Homer through the whole Odyssey speaks much in honour of the art which he himself loved, and in which he so eminently excelled: from these and other passages we may learn the state of poetry in those ages: 'Poets (says Eustathius) were ranked in the class of philosophers; and the ancients made use of them as preceptors in music and morality.' Strabo quotes this very passage as an instance of the excellence of poetry in forming the soul to worthy actions: Egysthus could not debauch Clytemnestra, until he banished the poet who was her guide and instructor.

Various are the conjectures of the ancients about the name of the bard here celebrated: some, says Eustathius, tell us, it was Chariades, some Demodocus, some Glaucus, &c. but I pass them over, because they are conjectures.

There were many degrees of these *αοιδοι*; some were *αοιδοι δηνων*, others *αοιδοι περὶ γαμος*: but such bards as are here mentioned were of an higher station, and retained as instructors by kings and princes.

I cannot omit one remark of Eustathius: he tells us, that some persons write that these *αοιδοι* had their names from hence, *ως αοιδοι μὴ έχοντες*; exactly resembling the modern Italian singers: Madam Dacier is not to be forgiven for passing over a remark of such importance; if this be true, it makes a great difference between the ancient and modern poets, and is the only advantage I know we have over them.

V. 344. *Then virtue was no more ; her guard away,
She fell, &c.]*

There is a fine moral couched in the story of the bard and Clytemnestra : it admirably paints the advantage we draw from wise companions for the improvement of our virtues : Clytemnestra was chaste, because her instructor was wise : his wisdom was an insuperable guard to her modesty. It was long before she yielded ; virtue and honour had a long contest ; but she no sooner yielded to adultery, but she assisted in the murder of her husband ; from whence we may draw another moral, that one vice betrays us into another : and when once the fences of honour are thrown down, we become a prey to every passion. * DACIER.

V. 346. *E'en to the temple stalk'd th' adult'rous spouse.]* Here is a surprising mixture of religion and impiety : Egysthus, upon the accomplishment of so great a crime as adultery, returns thanks to the gods by oblations, as if they had assisted him in the execution of it. Nestor dwells upon it at large, to shew that Egysthus greatly aggravated his guilt by such a piece of impious devotion. DACIER.

V. 359. *Apollo touch'd him with his gentle dart.]* Homer calls the darts of Apollo *ayava*, or gentle ; to signify that those who die thus suddenly, die without pain. EUSTATHIUS.

Dacier complains that some critics think Homer worthy of blame for enlarging upon so mean a person as a pilot. It is a sufficient answer to observe, that arts were in high esteem in those times, and men that were eminent in them were in great honour. Neither were arts then confined, as in these ages, to mean personages : no less a person than Ulysses builds a vessel in the sequel of the Odyssey ; so that this is a false piece of delicacy. If Homer be culpable, so is Virgil ; he gives the genealogy of Palinurus, as well as Homer of Phrontes. Virgil's description is censured as too long, Homer concludes his in seven lines ; and lastly, Virgil's episode has been judged by the critics to be an unnecessary ornament, and to contribute nothing to the poem : Homer relates the death of Phrontes, to introduce the dispersion of the fleet of Menelaus ; the fleet might well be scattered, when it wanted so excellent a pilot.

V. 383. *On th' Egyptian coast.*] In the original, it is, 'The wind and water carried them to Egyptus' Homer by Egyptus means the river Nile, and then it is always used in the masculine gender: the region about it took its name from the river Egyptus, this is always used in the feminine gender; but the country had not received that name in the days of Homer. EUSTATHIUS.

What Dacier adds to this observation may assist in determining the dispute concerning the priority of Homer and Hesiod: Hesiod makes mention of the river Nilus; if therefore it be true that Egyptus had not been called by the name of Nilus in the time of Homer, it is a demonstration that Hesiod was posterior to Homer; otherwise he could not have been acquainted with any other name but that of Egyptus.

V. 390. *From Athens to his realm*] There is a different reading in this place; instead of *απ' Αθηνων*, some write *απ' Οωνων*; for Orestes was educated by Strophius king of Phocis, and father of Pylades: the ancients reconcile the difference, by saying that Orestes might be sent from Phocis to Athens for his education, and returning thence to his own country, might revenge the death of his father Agamemnon; so that although he was first bred up in Phocis, he was afterwards a sojourner in Athens. EUSTATHIUS.

V. 411. *A length of ocean and unbounded sky,
Which scarce the sea-fowl in a year o'erfly.*]

It must be confessed, that Nestor greatly exaggerates this description: Homer himself tells us, that a ship may sail in five days from Crete to Egypt; wherefore then this hyperbole of Nestor? It might perhaps be to deter Telemachus from a design of sailing to Crete, and he through his inexperience might believe the description. It may be added, that what Nestor speaks concerning the flight of birds, may be only said to shew the great distance of that sea: nay, by a favourable interpretation it may be reconciled to truth; the meaning then must be this: should a person observe that sea a whole year, he would not see one bird flying over it, both because of the vastness and dreadfulness of it; and perhaps

the whole of this might arise from the observation, that this sea is not frequented by birds. This is wholly and almost literally taken from Eustathius; and if we add to this the ignorance of the sea and sea-affairs in those ages, we shall the less wonder to hear so wise a man as Nestor describing it with so much terror. Navigation is now greatly improved, and the moderns sail further in a month, than the ancients could in a year; their whole art consisting chiefly in coasting along the shores, and consequently they made but little way.

V. 425. *Now immolate the tongues...*] Various are the reasons which Eustathius reports concerning this oblation of the tongues at the conclusion of the sacrifice. It was to purge themselves from any evil words they might have uttered; or because the tongue was reckoned the best part of the sacrifice, and so reserved for the completion of it; or they offered the tongues to the gods, as witnesses to what they had spoken. I omit the rest as superfluous. They had a custom of offering the tongues to Mercury, because they believed him the giver of eloquence. Dacier expatiates upon this custom. The people, says she, might fear, lest through wine and the joy of the festival, they might have uttered some words unbecoming the sanctity of the occasion: by this sacrifice of the tongues, they signified that they purged away whatever they had spoken amiss during the festival; and asked in particular pardon of Mercury, who presided over discourse, to the end that they might not carry home any uncleanness which might stop the blessings expected from the sacrifice.

V. 429. *Nor fits it to prolong the heav'nly feast,
Timeless, indecent, &c.]*

Eustathius shews the difference between *εορταί*, festivals, and *θυσιαί*, or sacrifices: in the former it was customary to spend the whole night in wine and rejoicing: in the latter, this was reckoned an unlawful custom, through the fear of falling into any indecencies through wine. He likewise gives another reason of this injunction, by telling us that it was the custom to offer sacrifices to the celestial powers in the day, and even to finish them about

the setting of the sun; and that those who dealt in incantations performed their sacrifices to the infernal powers by night, and finished them before sun-rising. Either of these reasons sufficiently explains the words of the goddess; and the former carries in it an excellent moral, that particular care should be taken in our acts of devotion, not to turn religion into impiety.

V. 450. *When beds of royal state invite your stay?*] This passage gives us a full insight into the manners of these hospitable ages; they not only kept a treasury for bowls or vases of gold or silver, to give as *ξένια*, or gifts of hospitality, but also a wardrobe of various habits and rich furniture, to lodge and bestow upon strangers. Eustathius relates, that Tellus of Agrigentum was a person of so great hospitality, that five hundred horsemen coming to his house in the winter season, he entertained them, and gave every man a cloak and a tunic. This laudable custom prevailed, and still prevails, in the eastern countries; it was the practice of Abraham of old, and is at this day of the Turks, as we may learn from their caravanseras, erected for the reception of travellers.

V. 468. *I go to challenge from the Caucons.*] The poet makes a double use of these words of the goddess; she gives an air of probability to her excuse, why she should not be pressed to stay; and at the same time Homer avoids the absurdity of introducing that goddess at Sparta; Menelaus and Helen are celebrating the nuptials of their son and daughter: Minerva is a virgin deity, and consequently an enemy to all nuptial ceremonies. EUSTATHIUS.

But it may be necessary to observe who these Caucons are: we find in the tenth book of the Iliad, the Caucons mentioned as auxiliaries to Troy: there Dolon says,

‘ The Carians, Caucons, the Pelasgian host,
And Leleges encamp along the coast.’

Are these Caucons the same with those here mentioned? Eustathius informs us, that there was a people of Triphyly, between Elis and Pylos, named Caucons: but Strabo says, that the whole race is now extinct, and that these here mentioned are of Dymæa, and take their name from the river Caucon; whereas those in the

Iliad are Paphlagonians: they were a wandering nation, and consequently might be^a the same people originally, and retain the same name in different countries.

V. 478. *But chief the rev'rend sage admir'd*] It may be asked why Nestor is in such a surprise at the discovery of the goddess: it is evident from the Iliad, that he had been no stranger to such intercourses of the deities; nay, in this very book Nestor tells us, that Ulysses enjoyed almost the constant presence of Minerva; insomuch that Sophocles, the great imitator of Homer, relates, that he knew the goddess by her voice, without seeing her. Eustathius answers, that the wonder of Nestor arose not from the discovery of that deity, but that she should accompany so young a person as Telemachus: after her departure the old man stood amazed, and looked upon that hero as some very extraordinary person, whom in such early years the goddess of war and wisdom had vouchsafed to attend. This interpretation agrees perfectly with what Nestor speaks to Telemachus.

* V. 518. . . . *And sat on polish'd stone before his palace gate.*] We have here an ancient custom recorded by the poet; a king placed himself before the gate of his palace upon a seat of marble, worn smooth by long use, says Eustathius, or perhaps smoothed exquisitely by the hand of the workman. What I would chiefly observe is, that they placed themselves thus in public for the dispatch of justice: we read in the Scripture of judges 'sitting in the gate:' and that this procedure of Nestor was for that purpose, is probable from the expression, 'He sat in the seat where Neleus [*μνορῶν*, or Consiliarius] used to sit' (which seems to express his wisdom in the discharge of justice). Nestor is also described as bearing his sceptre in his hand, which was never used but upon some act of regality, in the dispatch of justice, or other solemn occasions. Perhaps, says Dacier, these seats or thrones might be consecrated with oil, to draw a reverence to the seats of justice as by an act of religion; but I rather judge (adds she) that no more is meant than to express the shining of these thrones, they being undoubtedly made of marble.

V. 528. *Pisistratus.*] Would I indulge my fancy in a con-
 jec-

ture, I might suppose that the famous tyrant Pisistratus was descended, or borrowed his name from this son of Nestor. Herodotus informs us, as Eustathius observes, that all the Pisistrati were originally Pylans. If this be true, we have a very strong evidence that Homer is not all fiction, but that he celebrates the great men of those ages with reality, and only embellishes the true story with the ornaments of poetry.

V. 540. *Laerceus . . . artist divine, &c.*] The author of the Parallel quotes this passage to prove that Homer was ignorant of the mechanic arts: we have here, says he, a gilder with his anvil and hammer; but what occasion has he for an anvil and hammer in the art of a gilder? Boileau has excellently vindicated Homer from this objection, in his reflections upon Longinus: this gilder was a gold-beater: Nestor, we see, furnished the gold, and he beat it into leaves, so that he had occasion to make use of his anvil and hammer; the anvil was portable, because the work was not laborious. Our modern travellers assure us, that it is at this day the practice in the eastern regions, as in Persia, &c. for the artists in metals to carry about with them the whole implements of trade, to the house of the persons where they find employment; it is therefore a full vindication of Homer, to observe that the gold this artist used in gilding was nothing but gold beat into fine leaves.

V. 552. *Nor was Minerva absent . . .*] It may be asked in what sense Minerva can be said to come to the sacrifice? Eustathius answers, that the ancients finding the inclinations of men to be bent incontinently upon pleasures, to oblige them to use them moderately, distinguished times, ordained sacrifices, and representing the gods in the forms of men, brought them to use those pleasures with discretion; they taught them that the gods came down to their libations and sacrifices, to induce them to govern their conversation with reverence and modesty: thus Jupiter and the other gods in the Iliad, and Neptune in the Odyssey, are said to feast with the Ethiopians.

If I might be pardoned a conjecture, I would suppose, that Minerva may in another sense be said to come to the sacrifice; I mean by her image or statue: and what may seem to confirm

this opinion is what Diodorus relates in his third book concerning the above-mentioned Ethiopians; they carried about the statues of Jupiter and the other gods twelve days, during which time the gods were said to be gone to the Ethiopians: and if the gods may be said to come to the Ethiopians by their statues, why may not the same be said of Minerva, from the introduction of her statue among the Pylians? So that the appearance of the goddess may possibly mean the appearance of her statue.

V. 560. *Stratius and Echephron, &c.*] Nestor here makes use only of the ministry of his sons; the reason of it is, because it was reckoned honourable to serve in the performance of sacrifice, this being in some sense an attending upon the gods; or because it was the practice of those ages for great persons to do those offices with their own hands, which in the latter have been performed by servants.

Eustathius reports a saying of Antigonus, who observing his son behaving himself imperiously to his subjects, 'Know'st thou not,' says he, 'that royalty itself is but illustrious servitus?' An intimation that he himself was but a servant of the public, and therefore should use his servants with moderation.

That the true reason of Nestor's assisting in the sacrifice is, because kings anciently had the inspection of religion, and priesthood was joined to royalty, according to that line of Virgil,

'Rex Anius, rex idem hominum Phœbique sacerdos.'

V. 573. *Maids, wives, and matrons, mix a shrilling sound.*] I have kept the meaning of the word in the original, which signifies prayers made with loud cries; ολολυξαν. Ολολυγη, says Hesychius, is, φωνη γυναικων ην ποιουνται εν τοις ιεροις ευχομεναι, 'the voice of women, which they make at sacrifices in their prayers.' But there is still something in it more to the present purpose; the scholiast upon Æschylus remarks that this word is not used properly but when applied to the prayers offered to Minerva, for Minerva is the only goddess to whom prayers are made with loud cries, she being the goddess of war; to other deities they offer prayer with thanksgiving; και γαρ μονη τη Αθηνα δαιμονισθη πολεμικη η ολολυξασι, τοις δ' αλλοις θεοις παραινεσθαι.

Thus also in the sixth book of the Iliad, v. 301.

- Αἰ δ' ὀλολυγὴ πᾶσαι Ἀθηνῆ χειρὰς ἀνίσχον.

They fill the dome with supplicating cries.

And in the present passage in the Odyssey,

..... αἰ δ' ὀλολῆξαν

Οὐλατρες τε, νοι τε, &c.

DACI2R.

V. 594. *Sweet Polycaste, took the pleasing toil
To bathe the prince, &c.]*

It is very necessary to say something about this practice of women bathing and anointing men; it frequently occurs through the whole Odyssey, and is so contrary to the usage of the moderns, as to give offence to modesty; neither is this done by women of inferior quality, but we have here a young princess bathing, anointing, and clothing the naked Telemachus. Eustathius indeed tells us, it was undoubtedly by her father's command: but if it was a piece of immodesty, it does not solve the objection, whoever commanded it. I confess 't would be immodest in these ages of the world, and the only excuse that occurs to me is, to say that custom established it. This in manners, in some degree, as in dress; if a fashion never so indecent prevails, yet no person is ridiculous, because it is fashionable: so in manners, if a practice prevails universally, though not reconcileable to real modesty, yet no person can be said to be immodest who comes into it, because it is agreeable to the custom of the times and countries.

V. 610, &c. *The conclusion of the book.]* I shall lay together what I have further to observe on the conclusion of this book: it is remarkable, that the poet does not amuse himself in describing the present Telemachus received from Nestor, or the provisions for the journey, or even the journey itself at large; he dispatches the whole in a few lines very judiciously; he carries his hero directly to Menelaus, who is to furnish many incidents that contribute to the design of the poem, and passes over other matters as unnecessary.

^ We have likewise a piece of poetical geography, and learn that it is exactly two days journey from Pyle to Lacedæmon.

^ This book takes up three days; the first is spent in the inquiries Telemachus makes of Nestor concerning Ulysses; the two last, in the morning sacrifice at Pylos, and in the journey of Telemachus to Lacedæmon, so that five days have now passed since the opening of the poem. I have said nothing about the sacrifice, though it be the most exact description of the sacrifices, as practised by the ancients, perhaps extant in any author; I refer to the observations upon the first book of the Iliad.

I would here remark, that the three first books are written with the utmost simplicity; there has been no room for such exalted strokes of poetry as are to be found in the Iliad, or in the future parts of the Odyssey: but this is not owing to the decay of genius in Homer, some critics have affirmed (who look upon the Odyssey as bearing marks of his declining years), but to the nature of the subject. The characters of Achilles and Ulysses are both very great, but very different. The Iliad consists of battles and a continual commotion; the Odyssey, in patience and wisdom; and consequently the style of the two poems must be as different as the characters of the two heroes. A noble fountain of poetry opens in the next book, and flows with an uninterrupted course almost through the whole Odyssey.



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